

ISAAC AND IPHIGENIA: PORTRAYALS OF CHILD SACRIFICE IN ISRAELITE AND GREEK LITERATURE *

As a methodological point, it should always be recognized that Hebrew Bible scholars are forced to work with a body of literature that is fairly limited in size. The modern rediscovery of the ancient Near East has unveiled a plethora of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic texts which have aided scholars in their quest to more fully understand the worldview of the biblical authors. However, the understandable embrace of these materials has led scholars to less frequently integrate the expansive Hellenic literary corpus into comparative studies on the Hebrew Bible and its world ¹. Nevertheless, pre-Hellenistic Greek literature has the potential to shed light on less understood aspects of the world of ancient Judah. By better integrating this material into our study of the Hebrew Bible alongside more commonly used cognate corpora, we gain a richer understanding of the world of the ancient Eastern Mediterranean ².

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¹ For examples of those using the Hellenic corpus as a comparandum for pre-Second Temple narratives in the Hebrew Bible, see, among others, E. AUERBACH, *Mimesis*. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (trans. W.R. TRASK) (Princeton, NJ 1953) 3-23; J. VAN SETERS, “Is There Any Historiography in the Hebrew Bible? A Hebrew-Greek Comparison”, *JNSL* 28 (2002) 1-25; G. DARSHAN, “The Origins of the Foundation Stories Genre in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Eastern Mediterranean”, *JBL* 133 (2014) 689-709.

² The paradigmatic study on the interplay between Greek and ancient Near Eastern cultures is W. BURKERT, *Die orientalisierende Epoche in der griechischen Religion und Literatur* (Heidelberg 1984), which thoroughly discusses the extensive contacts between and ways in which Greek culture was influenced by the ancient Near East in the arenas of literature, ritual, myth, and medical and divinatory traditions, among others. For other treatments of the interplay between the Near Eastern and Greek literary traditions, see M.L. WEST, *The East Face of Helicon*. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth (Oxford 1997); C. LÓPEZ-RUIZ, *When the Gods Were Born*. Greek Cosmogonies and the Near East (Cambridge, MA 2010); M.R. BACHVAROVA, “The Transmission of Liver Divination from East to West”, *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 54 (2012) 1-22; B. HALPERN – K.S. SACKS – T.E. KELLEY, eds., *Cultural Contact and Appropriation in the Axial-Age Mediterranean World* (CHANE 86; Leiden 2017).

Literary portrayals of child sacrifice are one such case where we can use Greek data to better understand the Hebrew Bible. Child sacrifice occurs with some frequency in the Hebrew Bible as both a narrative and legal *topos*, with a variety of attitudes on display³. Hellenic literature, which also frequently contains portrayals of child sacrifice, provides us with another corpus from the ancient Mediterranean that may be useful in understanding the ways in which ancient cultures represented and responded to this practice⁴. This issue is particularly ripe for exploration precisely because the Mesopotamian tradition fails to provide us with sufficient comparative material. In fact, there is a striking lack of literary portrayals of child sacrifice within the Mesopotamian corpus. This is likely due to the distinctive nature of Mesopotamian sacrifice when compared with Levantine and Greek conceptions⁵. Hellenic texts, then, not only provide us with a corpus that contains comparanda on this subject, but one that more closely shares the notion of sacrifice found in the Hebrew Bible.

One set of stories that helpfully illustrate attitudes towards child sacrifice is the Aqedah and the story of Iphigenia's sacrifice. Both of these stories are set in foundational narratives and feature an unmotivated divine demand for the sacrifice of a child. In this article, we contend that both ancient Greek and Israelite literatures display a similar embarrassment towards the portrayal of this child sacrifice which can be seen in the way that both cultures modified these stories to include the element of ritual substitution.

³ The topic of child sacrifice has no small place in the history of biblical scholarship. On this, see, among others, J. LEVENSON, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son. The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, CT 1993); K. FINSTERBUSCH, "The First-Born between Sacrifice and Redemption in the Hebrew Bible", *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (eds. K. FINSTERBUSCH – A. LANGE – K.F. DIETHARD RÖMHELD) (Leiden 2006) 87-108; H.D. DEWRELL, *Child Sacrifice in Ancient Israel* (EANE 5; Winona Lake, IN 2017); D. MARKL, "Polemics Against Child Sacrifice in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History", *Intolerance, Polemics, and Debate in Antiquity. Politico-Cultural, Philosophical, and Religious Forms of Critical Conversation* (eds. G. VAN KOOTEN – J. VAN RUITEN) (Leiden 2019) 57-91.

⁴ For overviews of child and human sacrifice in Greek literature and thought, see D.D. HUGHES, *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece* (London 1991); P. BONNECHERE, *Le sacrifice humain en Grèce ancienne* (Liège 1994); S. GEORGIOUDI, "À propos du sacrifice humain en Grèce ancienne: remarques critiques", *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 1 (1999) 61-82; G. WEILER, "Human Sacrifice in Greek Culture", *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, 35-64.

⁵ On this distinction, see W.G. LAMBERT, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia", *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. QUAEGBEUR) (OLA 55; Leuven 1993) 191-202. Furthermore, there is no archaeological evidence of the ritual sacrifice of children in Mesopotamia. There is, however, evidence for ritual human murder, such as the ritual of the substitute king performed during the reign of Esarhaddon; see SAA 10.350-352; W.G. LAMBERT, "A Part of the Ritual for the Substitute King", *AfO* 18 (1957/1958) 109-112. Philo also shows an interesting awareness of the distinctive lack of child-sacrifice traditions in Mesopotamia when discussing the Aqedah in *Abr.* 177-190.

Our exploration will begin with an examination of the Aqedah in Genesis 22 alongside related declarations in the Pentateuch that shed light on early Israelite views of child sacrifice. We will then outline and review the several retellings of the Iphigenia story, particularly those by Hesiod and Euripides, highlighting the ways in which later editors and authors modified the basic narrative to avoid Iphigenia's actual death as recounted in the early tradition. We will then touch upon how these later understandings of Greek literature parallel Biblical texts that explicitly reject the practice of child sacrifice. Throughout, we do not argue for direct literary dependence but simply observe similar cultural phenomena. We offer these analyses of the various trends in Greek and Judahite literatures as a contribution towards the better integration of the Hellenic corpus into research on the Hebrew Bible.

I. CHILD SACRIFICE IN GENESIS AND EXODUS

The Aqedah narrative in Genesis 22 has provoked more discussion among both ancient and modern exegetes than any other portrayal of child sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible ⁶. The provocative narrative, in which a relentlessly faithful Abraham is commanded to sacrifice the long-awaited son through whom his line was promised to continue, can be summarized as follows: following the birth of Isaac in Gen 21,1-7, God (אלהים) tries Abraham, instructing him, without explanation, to offer up his *yāhîd* (יחיד) as a burnt offering (Gen 22,1-2) ⁷; Abraham complies with the command, taking Isaac and two servants into the mountains (Gen 22,3); after leaving the servants behind, Abraham and Isaac have a brief conversation about the sacrifice Abraham intends to offer (Gen 22,4-8); Abraham then builds an altar, binds Isaac, and places him upon the altar (Gen 22,9); as

⁶ See, in addition to the literature cited in our following analysis, S. SPIEGEL, *The Last Trial. On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac as a Sacrifice* (New York 1967); E. NOORT, "Genesis 22: Human Sacrifice and Theology in the Hebrew Bible", *The Sacrifice of Isaac. The Aqedah* (Genesis 22) and its Interpretations (eds. E. NOORT – E. TIGCHELAAR) (TBN 4; Leiden 2002) 1-20.

⁷ Because יחיד appears to function as a technical term in child-sacrifice contexts, we have chosen to leave it untranslated. Philo of Byblos, in his *Phoenician History*, reports that Kronos sacrificed his "only-begotten" (μονογενής) son whom he named Ἰεοῦδ (*Praep. ev.* 1.10.44,10-13); Philo states that the Phoenicians still call child-sacrifice victims by that name. This is apparently a Greek rendering of the Phoenician equivalent of Hebrew יחיד, a term associated with child sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 22,2; Jdg 11,34 and possibly Jer 6,26; Amos 8,10; Zech 12,10). For the text-critical problems of this word in Philo, see H.W. ATTRIDGE – R.A. ODEN, *Philo of Byblos: The Phoenician History* (CBQMS 9; Washington, D.C. 1981) 94, n. 150. Deciding the text-critical issue of reading Ἰεοῦδ or Ἰεδοῦδ here is compounded by the fact that LXX frequently translates *yhyd* with ἀγαπητός.

Abraham is preparing to slaughter his son, an “angel/messenger of YHWH” (מלאך יהוה) intervenes, recognizing Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son as sufficient (Gen 22,10-12); Abraham then offers a nearby ram in place of his son (Gen 22,13-14); as a reward, he receives a blessing and returns to his servants at the end of the ordeal, alone (Gen 22,15-19).

The importance of this narrative is signaled by its inclusion in the Abraham cycle, as Abraham is viewed as the founding patriarch of Israel and the wellspring of Israelite identity, the person to whom YHWH initially promised the territory of Canaan (cf. Genesis 12, 15, 17). Traditionally, commentators have interpreted the received form of this text as a polemic against child sacrifice in the form of a test of Abraham’s obedience, with redemption taking the place of first-born sacrifice⁸. This interpretation of the narrative’s function appears consonant with certain apodictic commands pertaining to child sacrifice which occur in the book of Exodus. Instructions given during the first Passover indicate that redemption of the firstborn human child is either allowed or required (Exod 13,11-14). The ambiguous language in this passage licenses different interpretations, but the association of redemption with child sacrifice echoes the end of Genesis 22, especially if one understands the שֶׁה (“caprovid”) as the required replacement for the human as well as donkey first-born. This command is reinforced when read in light of Exod 34,18-20, another set of Passover instructions which allows for redemption of the firstborn in lieu of sacrifice. When Genesis 22 is read alongside these passages from Exodus, they present a unified view concerning how to handle human first-born sacrifice — redemption by a שֶׁה is always a potential, if not required, option⁹.

⁸ S. SPIEGEL, *The Last Trial*, 64; M. WEINFELD, “The Worship of Molech and of the Queen of Heaven and its Background”, *UF* 4 (1972) 133-154, here 134; B. ERLING, “First-Born and Firstlings in the Covenant Code”, *SBLSP* 25 (1986) 477-478; T. VEIJOLA, “Das Opfer des Abraham — Paradigma des Glaubens aus dem nachexilischen Zeitalter”, *ZTK* 85 (1988) 165-198. For a review and refutation of this view (from diverse viewpoints), see E.A. SPEISER, *Genesis* (AB 1; New York 1964) 165; M. SMITH, “A Note on Burning Babies”, *JAOS* 95 (1975) 477-479; N. SARNA, *Genesis* (Philadelphia, PA 1989) 153; O. BOEHM, “Child Sacrifice, Ethical Responsibility, and the Existence of the People of Israel”, *VT* 54 (2004) 145-148. F. STAVRAKOPOULOU, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice. Biblical Distortions of Historical Realities* (BZAW 338; Berlin 2004) 192, argues that a major factor in scholars’ interpretation of this narrative arises from a desire to understand animal sacrifice as the sole legitimate form of sacrifice.

⁹ See also D. FRIEDMANN, *To Kill and Take Possession. Law, Morality, and Society in Biblical Stories* (Peabody, MA 2002) 139-140. However, as K. FINSTERBUSCH, “The First-Born”, 87 n. 2, observes: “Several studies have considered these laws [on redemption of the first-born] — with altogether contradictory conclusions”. Given the lack of consensus in the field about how best to understand these laws, our presentation here should be understood to represent only one of several interpretive options.

However, these passages do not provide a complete picture of how ancient Israelites viewed child sacrifice¹⁰. Alongside the passages that allow or command redemption in the case of child sacrifice, there are also more equivocal references to the act which contain no such escape clauses. The most explicit of these is found in Exod 22,28-29 where the act of presenting firstborn humans to YHWH is described with and equated to the presentation of agricultural goods and firstborn domesticates. The text requires that the child be given (נתן) to YHWH — no redemption by ש is mentioned¹¹. Similarly, Exod 13,1-2 has YHWH order Moses to sanctify (קדש C) every firstborn, whether human or animal, effectively equating the two¹². Whether or not these passages should be understood as commanding the sacrifice of the first-born is an open question; however, the fact that they both set humans and animals on the same footing is certainly suggestive.

The passages equating human and animal firstborn (Exod 13,1-2; 22,28-29) form a contrast with those commands that require redemption of human first-born (Exod 13,11-14; 34,18-20), as the latter passages explicitly distinguish between the treatment of humans and most domestic animals. Some scholars have nevertheless argued that the passages equating humans and animals should not be understood as strict commands for first-born sacrifice. Sometimes this objection occurs at the level of language, based on lack of explicit sacrificial terminology in these passages¹³. However,

¹⁰ We feel it is important to emphasize that the legal corpora contained in the Bible do not constitute law as we understand the term today. However, these legal collections do seem to be descriptive representations of normative behavior for particular communities at particular times. We nowhere intend to suggest that these corpora were directly consulted to determine proper practice, but we do believe that they help illuminate contemporary ideals for at least some sectors of the Israelite/Judahite community. For further discussion of the nature of biblical and ancient Near Eastern law, see M. WEINFELD, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Minneapolis, MN 1995) 156; B.S. JACKSON, "Justice and Righteousness in the Bible: Rule of Law or Royal Paternalism?", *ZAR* 4 (1998) 218-262; R. WESTBROOK, "The Character of Ancient Near Eastern Law", *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, Vol. 1 (ed. R. WESTBROOK) (Leiden 2003) 1-90.

¹¹ See W.H.C. PROPP, *Exodus 19-40* (AB 2A; New York 2006) 263-272, for further comments on these verses.

¹² The scholarly tradition regarding Exod 13,2 is both rich and varied. James Frazer, notable for his tendency to identify child sacrifice in ancient ritual far more often than his contemporaries or any who followed in his wake, understood Exod 13,2 as another unequivocal reference to the act. See J. FRAZER, *The Golden Bough*, Vol 4. The Dying God (London 1911) 174-179. The continued disagreement among scholars over how to understand this verse shows that, while Frazer may still be proved correct about its meaning, he was wrong about its explicitness. For a detailed overview with relevant references, see W.H.C. PROPP, *Exodus 1-18* (AB 2; New York 1999) 421, 454-456.

¹³ Some have argued that terms such as נתן and קדש C in these passages indicate that sacrifice is not envisioned; see, e.g., WEINFELD, "Molech and of the Queen of Heaven";

the lack of sacrificial terminology, such as *עֹלָה* or *זֶבַח* (C), appears to be a normative feature of commands relating to the first-born. Even when first-born animals are offered, these standard sacrificial terms do not describe the act. Tellingly, the lack of sacrificial language in these passages has not led scholars to suggest that the animals are not sacrifices. What is important about the passages cited above is that human first-born are equated with animals and agricultural goods — whatever one thinks is done with animal first-born should be imagined as the outcome for human first-born.

In other cases, the redemption allowances of Exod 13,11-14 and 34,18-20 are invoked to explain the intent of Exod 13,1-2 and 22,28-29¹⁴. In our opinion, such an approach raises methodological issues. There does not seem to be a clear justification for treating the differences between these passages any differently than the hundreds of other conflicts and tensions between various corpora of ritual and legal material that scholars have leveraged as the basis for identifying different viewpoints among the various authors of the Hebrew Bible. Rather than allowing the texts that foreground redemption to control our interpretation of the texts that do not contain such statements, we should first look to the plain meaning of each text and interpret each in its own right¹⁵. In this case, it would mean accepting that Exod 22,28-29 envisions periodic child sacrifice as an institutionalized aspect of YHWH worship, and that Exod 13,1-2 may do the same. Those who argue that 13,1-2 have redemption in the background due to their proximity to 13,12-13 have a stronger argument, but only if one accepts that both verses are from the same horizon. However, there are numerous repetitions in Exodus 13 that suggest multiple hands at work¹⁶. This

IDEM, “Burning Babies”. However, strong arguments against this position are offered in H. DEWRELL, “Child Sacrifice in Ancient Israel and Its Opponents” (Ph.D. dissertation; Johns Hopkins University 2012) 27-34.

¹⁴ See M. NOTH, *Exodus* (trans. J.S. BOWDEN) (OTL; Philadelphia, PA 1962) 101-102, 188; U. CASSUTO, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. I. ABRAHAMS) (Jerusalem 1967) 294-295; N. SARNA, *Exodus* (JPS Commentary; Philadelphia, PA 2003) 140-141; B. JACOB, *Das Buch Exodus* (Stuttgart 1997) 716-718; T. DOZEMAN, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI 2009) 286-288, 547-549. W.H.C. PROPP, *Exodus 19–40*, 264-271, briefly explores the relationship between Exod 22,28-29 and similar passages before going on to discuss the evidence for child sacrifice in ancient Israel. While he ultimately concludes that it was a possibility, he hedges this with a number of caveats, including the possibility that this verse envisions dedication to sacred service rather than as a command to sacrifice.

¹⁵ Such an approach is also supported by the broader corpus of references to child sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible that suggest the controversial status of the practice, for which see B. HALPERN, “The False Torah of Jeremiah 8 in the Context of Seventh Century BCE Pseudepigraphy: The First Documented Rejection of Tradition”, *From Gods to God. The Dynamics of Iron Age Cosmologies* (ed. M.J. ADAMS) (Tübingen 2009) 132-141.

¹⁶ The chapter itself is divided into two panels (Exod 13,5-10 and 13,11-16). Obvious repetitions include the following: both sections begin with the incipit “And it will be” and

suggests that we should understand 13,1-2, despite its proximity to a redemption clause, on its own terms when it equates humans and animals. Put plainly, the Pentateuch contains multiple perspectives on child sacrifice, just as it does on many other issues.

The existence of multiple viewpoints regarding the practice of child sacrifice in legal collections invites a closer look at the account of the binding of Isaac. A close reading of the text reveals major tensions in the narrative arc of the Aqedah. The first involves the repeated emphasis which the author of the text places on the togetherness of Abraham and Isaac as they approach the mountain after their departure from the accompanying young men and donkey. In pleonastic language, we are twice told that Abraham and Isaac “went, both of them, together” (Gen 22,6.8). In contrast to this, after Abraham sacrifices the ram, he returns alone to the servants he had earlier left behind with no reference, explicit or implicit, to Isaac (Gen 22,19). The language of unity is transferred to Abraham and these servants as they travel to Beersheba, but Isaac is nowhere mentioned. Given the author’s emphasis on Isaac’s presence up to the end of the story, one is left to wonder what has happened to him.

A second point of tension arises between the two declarations of the מלאך יהוה to Abraham. The angel praises Abraham in both speeches, stating “you did not withhold your son, your *yāhîd*” (Gen 22,12.16). A surface reading of this statement would seem to suggest that Abraham had in fact offered Isaac as commanded. However, the context of this statement differs in the two speeches, with each emphasizing a different aspect of Abraham’s obedience. In the first speech, this statement serves as a comment on the internal disposition of Abraham — his willingness to sacrifice his son — stating that YHWH is now aware that “you fear god” (Gen 22,12). Such an emphasis comports well with our received text and other parts of this speech, centering God’s satisfaction with Abraham’s mere willingness to follow his instructions.

However, the language of the second speech implies a different perception of events, as the angel here comments not on Abraham’s disposition

then proceed to use similar language to convey similar messages; 13,5 and 13,11 both mention bringing the Israelites to the land of the Canaanites that was previously promised to them; 13,8 and 13,14 describe a conversation in which a father tells his son the tale of YHWH bringing them out of Egypt; 13,1-10 commands a consecration of the first-born followed by the Festival of Unleavened Bread, while 13,11-16 describes an alternative consecration of the firstborn followed by a redemption clause; 13,9 and 13,16 present nearly identical closing statements in which actions are said to be a sign on the hand as well as a reminder between the eyes, and both declare the strength of the hand of YHWH to be that which brought them out of slavery under the rule of Pharaoh. For that reason, the possibility of two different hands in this chapter must at least be entertained.

but on his action: “because you did this thing” (Gen 22,16) ¹⁷. Additionally, this second message promises Abraham a multitude of descendants for not withholding his son (Gen 22,17) ¹⁸. As observed by Moberly, this speech uniquely omits the typical promise of land ¹⁹. Such a reward echoes the connection between child sacrifice and blessings of abundance found in non-biblical contexts ²⁰. The angel’s commendation of Abraham for not withholding Isaac and for doing what God commanded again draws our attention to the conspicuous absence of Isaac following the sacrifice of the ram (Gen 22,13-19).

Finally, the introduction to the narrative reinforces the tensions between the two speeches. Here, we are told that God is “trying” (נסה) Abraham. This suggests that Abraham’s compliance with God’s command is at issue. While scholars have often used this heading to argue that God never intended Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the use of נסה elsewhere demonstrates that obedience in action (as opposed to disposition) is often the expected outcome ²¹. This heading, then, contributes to the disconnect between the expected outcome of the story — i.e., Abraham’s sacrifice in obedience to God’s command — and the outcome in the received text. The angel’s praise of Abraham for “doing this thing” (Gen 22,16) in the second speech strengthens the impression that actions and not simply disposition are at stake. If one were presented with the beginning of this story (Gen 22,1-2) and the second speech by the angel (Gen 22,15-18) without the intervening material, the natural conclusion you would come to is that Abraham had sacrificed Isaac, successfully completing God’s test by his obedience. In our received version, Isaac’s absence from the end of the story looms large in light of this language.

Among other explanations, these tensions raise the possibility that a version of Genesis 22 once existed (whether in oral or literary form) in which Abraham was the exemplar of proper child sacrifice ²². Scholars

¹⁷ The use of this story in Jas 2,20-24 also focuses on Abraham’s actions in offering Isaac. See further discussion of later Jewish and Christian reception below.

¹⁸ This seems to be fulfilled in Gen 25,1-4.

¹⁹ R.W.L. MOBERLY, “The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah”, *VT* 38 (1988) 302-323, here 318.

²⁰ E.g., *KAI* 103, 105, 106, 107. See also the discussion of the reason for Iphigenia’s sacrifice below.

²¹ E.g., Exod 15,25; 16,4; 20,20; Deut 8,2,16; 13,4; Judg 2,22; 3,1,4, all of which have God/YHWH as the subject.

²² We are making no commitments here to any particular model of how the Pentateuch was composed and redacted — this point stands regardless of whether one subscribes to Documentary, Fragmentary, Supplementary, or an alternative compositional view. See R.G. KRATZ, “The Analysis of the Pentateuch”, *ZAW* 128 (2016) 529-561, on how much various compositional approaches have in common. However, it should be noted that, to our knowledge, the first person to suggest that Genesis 22 was edited to remove elements

have long taken the appearance of the divine name YHWH in a chapter that otherwise uses generic אלהים as an indication of editorial intervention into the text. Typically, these scholars regard the second speech of the angel (Gen 22,15-18) as the addition²³. However, there is another possible reconstruction, easily obtained by stripping away the intervention of the מלאך יהוה who commands Abraham not to harm Isaac (Gen 22,11-13). Such a reconstruction resolves the tensions in the current narrative that we explored above: the angel commends Abraham for “not withholding” his son because he has sacrificed him, and God’s test of Abraham is successfully completed by this obedience — Isaac does not return with Abraham because he is dead²⁴.

Perhaps the largest obstacle to accepting this reconstruction is the damage it does to the genealogical sequence of Abraham-Isaac-Jacob that undergirds the Pentateuch. However, this is not an insurmountable problem for the above proposal. Martin Noth, for instance, argued that the Jacob and Isaac cycles were originally independent narrative complexes whose connection in the Torah is entirely secondary²⁵. Another possibility is that the story was not originally about Isaac, but about an unnamed son of Abraham²⁶. Finally, we should not discount the possibility that

of child sacrifice was R.E. FRIEDMAN, *Who Wrote the Bible* (New York 1987) 256-257. See also STAVRAKOPOULOU, *King Manasseh*, 192; T.L. YOREH, *The First Book of God* (BZAW 402; New York 2010) 65.

²³ J. WELLHAUSEN, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs* (Berlin 1899) 26; J. CARPENTER – G. HARFORD-BATTERSBY, *The Hexateuch According to the Revised Version*, 2 Vols. (London 1900) 2.32; R. RENDTORFF, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (Berlin 1977) 37-40; R.W.L. MOBERLY, “Earliest Commentary”, 302-323. For a non-compositional explanation of the occurrence of the divine Name, see E. BLUM, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984) 323.

²⁴ To be sure, this would be problematic for the genealogical sequence of Abraham-Isaac-Jacob, which is important to the Torah’s narrative. However, it should be recalled that the Torah in its received form has undergone editing to bring it in line with normative Judean views of Israelite history, and it is impossible to know what previous forms of the tradition may have looked like. For a possible solution to this problem, see the argument of M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart 1948) 58-62, 112-127, 234-236, that the Jacob and Isaac cycles are originally independent narrative complexes whose connection in the Torah is entirely secondary. It is also possible that an earlier version of this story did not feature Isaac, but an unnamed son of Abraham. The true solution to this conundrum may be contained in a tradition to which we no longer have access.

²⁵ M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichte*, 58-62, 112-127, 234-236.

²⁶ Interestingly, Qur’an 37,100-113 leaves the identity of the son ambiguous and treats the birth of Isaac as Abraham’s reward for his obedience. On the relationship between the Qur’an and Jewish midrash and legends, see B.-S. GARSIEL, “Quran’s Depiction of Abraham in Light of the Hebrew Bible and Midrash”, *The Convergence of Judaism and Islam. Religious, Scientific, and Cultural Dimensions* (eds. Y. LEV – M.M. LASKIER) (Gainesville, FL 2011) 45-63; G.S. REYNOLDS, *The Qur’an and the Bible. Text and Commentary* (New Haven, CT 2018).

Isaac's prominent role in the genealogical sequence is not a feature of the entire spectrum of ancient Israelite and Judahite tradition. Given the small role Isaac plays even in Genesis — especially when compared to the expansive narrative cycles about Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph — it is not out of the question that his position in earlier tradition was restricted to his role as the sacrificial victim of Abraham's obedience. While we may never have the solution to this issue, the possibility of Isaac's death in Genesis 22 should not be excluded. His death resolves enough of the tensions in Genesis 22 that it recommends itself as a viable option even in the face of the other difficulties it creates.

The problems caused by positing the death of Isaac are avoided in the scholarly preference for viewing the second angelic speech as the modification. However, this traditional approach glosses over the issue of Abraham being praised for not withholding his son and does not address why language emphasizing Abraham's actions would have been added to a story of redemption from child sacrifice. The reconstruction offered here has the advantage of answering these questions while the alternative view fails in this regard. The plausibility of this approach is further strengthened in that it provides a motivation for the later editing of the text — the first angelic speech and the finding of the ram represent a modification of the story to bring it into line with other views on the practice, such as the one reflected in the redemption clauses discussed above.

It is also worth noting that, though it is often claimed to serve this function, the rescue of Isaac in the received version is not entirely successful as a polemic against child sacrifice ²⁷. The reward YHWH bestows upon Abraham for his obedience undermines any supposed polemic. This blessing, as the text explicitly states, is a reward to Abraham for *not* staying his hand against his son (Gen 22,16). Even in the received version of the text, this wording implies that one should be theoretically willing to sacrifice their children, even if it is not required. In the final form of the Pentateuch, this story is followed, after the death of Sarah, by the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah and the birth of their twins (Gen 24,61-67; 25,19-26), Abraham's fruitful marriage to Keturah (Gen 25,1-4), and the various descendants of Ishmael (Gen 25,12-18). This generous rewarding of a man for his willingness to sacrifice his child seems a curious way to signal YHWH's distaste for the practice ²⁸. This fact holds true regardless of whether one

²⁷ See note 8 above.

²⁸ LEVENSON, *Death and Resurrection*, 12-13. Levenson further points out that the story does not even succeed as an aetiology for animal substitution; he observes: "If the point of the aqedah is 'abolish human sacrifice, substitute animals instead,' then Abraham cannot be regarded as having passed the test to which Gen 22:1 tells us God is here subjecting

accepts our contention that the received text of Genesis 22 has been modified to rescue an originally sacrificed Isaac.

However, the disconnect between narrative and intent may be plausibly explained by the reconstruction of the text's editorial history offered above. The text's positive regard for Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his child would be a remnant from the older version. And, if our proposal is correct, we would then have two constellations of narrative and legal material — one in which child sacrifice is required and one in which redemption is preferred ²⁹. Later editing then brought the group of material that presents child sacrifice as normative into line with later perceptions of the appropriateness of the practice.

However, even if such a reconstruction is rejected, the tensions explored above were a source of frequent comment and elaboration in both Jewish and Christian tradition ³⁰. These later traditions can be broadly grouped into one of two tracks, echoing the twofold view of child sacrifice analyzed above. On the one hand, there is an interpretive tradition that maintains that Isaac was either grievously wounded or actually killed by Abraham and resurrected by YHWH ³¹. In a similar vein, some texts interpret Isaac as a willing participant in his death, portraying this as the proper attitude for martyrs ³². On the other hand, a number of texts, stimulated

him". See also C. DELANEY, *Abraham on Trial. The Social Legacy of Biblical Myth* (Princeton, NJ 1998) 101-104.

²⁹ If Genesis 22 was in fact edited to include redemption, then the *normativity* of redemption is likely to be later. Nevertheless, it is probable that the two views existed side-by-side for some time before the redemption view won out. See below for more detailed discussion of the reception of child sacrifice in the Bible.

³⁰ For an excellent overview of the primary literature, see L. KUNDERT, *Die Opferung/Bindung Isaaks*. Gen 22,1-19 in frühen rabbinischen Texten (WMANT 79; Neukirchener-Vluyt 1998) and the many secondary references therein. For briefer explorations of the portrayal of the Aqedah in Second Temple and New Testament texts, see R.J. DALY, "The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac", *CBQ* 39 (1977) 45-75; K. BERTHELOT, "Jewish Views of Human Sacrifice in the Hellenistic and Roman Period", *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, 151-173. For an alternative explanation of these texts, see P.R. DAVIES – B.D. CHILTON, "The Aqedah: A Revised Tradition History", *CBQ* 40 (1978) 514-546. For a review of the Aqedah's reception history in Rabbinic interpretation, see I. KALIMI, "'Go, I beg you, take your beloved son and slay him!' The Binding of Isaac in Rabbinic Literature and Thought", *RRJ* 13 (2010) 1-29.

³¹ Midrash Tanhuma, *Vayerah* 23, states that Abraham drained a quarter of Isaac's blood from him before he was stopped by Satan (!) and a voice from heaven. bBer 62b and bZeb 62a state that not only did Abraham kill Isaac, but that he completed the ceremony of the burnt offering, reducing Isaac's corpse to ashes (see KALIMI, "Go, I beg you", 24-25, for Isaac's ashes in Rabbinic literature). In Christian tradition, evidence for such a view can be seen in the Letter to the Hebrews, where the author relays that Abraham expected that God would raise his son from the dead (Heb 11,17-19). The author even states that God did, figuratively speaking (ἐν παραβολῇ), resurrect Isaac. Presumably this requires an equally figurative death.

³² GenRab 56,7; among a host of other references to the Aqedah across the corpus of Maccabean literature, Isaac's willing submission to Abraham is recalled in 4 Maccabees 18

by the theological and moral problems of a god commanding the sacrifice of children, found creative ways of obviating these difficulties ³³.

A noticeable feature of the treatment of the Aqedah in these later interpretations is a sense of embarrassment about the dynamics of the narrative. In a corpus of literature that in other places outright condemns child sacrifice and views it as antithetical to the worship of YHWH, subsequent interpretations are characterized by a need to adjust and comment upon uncomfortable aspects of the story. Whether these adjustments took the form of the re-editing of Genesis 22 proposed here or the interpretive readjustments of later Rabbinic and Christian treatments of the story, YHWH's demand for Isaac's death, Abraham's unquestioning obedience, and the subsequent reward for his actions provoked a sense of discomfort from later readers who struggled to reconcile this text with their understanding of what YHWH requires.

In turning our eyes elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, we find a similar line of development in treatments of the story of Iphigenia, a Greek myth about the demanded sacrifice of a child at a foundational moment in Hellenic history.

II. IPHIGENIA IN EARLY GREEK EPIC: HESIOD AND THE CYPRIA

Like the story of Abraham in the Pentateuch, the narrative of the Trojan War was foundational to the ancient Greek idea of pan-Hellenic identity.

as an encouragement to martyrdom (within the context of this narrative, the young men are unequivocally equated with a bound, willing Isaac at 4 Macc 18,23a: οἱ Ἀβραμιαῖοι παῖδες). Setting the story of Isaac's sacrifice in parallel with the actual deaths of the sons in the story may suggest a reading of the narrative in which Isaac is not only a willing participant but actually dies (at least it suggests an interpretation of his death as divinely approved).

³³ E.g., the author of *Jubilees* clearly shows his discomfort with the unmotivated testing of Abraham by adding a brief, Job-like narrative to the front of the Aqedah, in which Mastema comes before YHWH and demands that he test Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son (*Jub.* 17,15-18). Note that a similar exegetical tactic can be seen in the treatment given to 2 Sam 24,1 in 1 Chron 21,1. On *Jubilees* 17 and its connection to the Aqedah in Genesis 22, see the recently published commentary: J.C. VANDERKAM, *Jubilees 1–21* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2018) 560-565. Interestingly, the author of *Jubilees* retains the return of Abraham, alone, to the boys and ass awaiting him. A slightly different reason for YHWH's testing of Abraham can be found in Pseudo-Philo 32,1-4, where YHWH uses the test to shame certain angels from their jealousy of Abraham. Earlier, in a conversation with Balaam, Pseudo-Philo 18,4-6 has YHWH imply the death or wounding of Isaac on the altar. On the date of Pseudo-Philo in the first century CE, see D.J. HARRINGTON, "Pseudo-Philo (First Century A.D.)," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 2 (ed. J.H. CHARLESWORTH) (New York 1985) 299. Genesis Rabbah 56,8 retells the narrative by having YHWH make explicit that he did not intend to see Isaac sacrificed at the hands of his father. The rabbis instead frame YHWH as stating: **לֹא אֶמְרָתִי לֶךְ שַׁחֲטֵהוּ אֱלֹהֵי הָעֵלֶהוּ** ("I did not tell you to slaughter him, rather to take him up"). As such, it would seem that the narrative is framed as little more than a grievous misunderstanding on the part of Abraham.

In the Trojan cycle, the Greek armies gather at Aulis prior to setting sail for Troy. This event represents the first moment when these various Greek polities come together, united in purpose against a common enemy³⁴. In literary representations of this event, Agamemnon is forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis before the Greeks can embark for Troy. This story provides an interesting parallel in both content and editorial history to the Aqedah³⁵. And, unlike the Aqedah where we can only speculate about alternative forms of the story, the tale of Iphigenia is extant in several forms from different authors and time periods.

Although there are signs that Homer was aware of the Iphigenia tradition, he nowhere directly recounts the story³⁶. Instead, we must turn to Hesiod³⁷, the other arbiter of early Greek tradition, for the earliest version

³⁴ Thucydides, *Hist.* 1:3 views the Trojan War as the first instance of common action among the various peoples who would come to be called Hellenes. Early Greek mythographers also placed stories of local genealogical concern prior to the events of the Trojan war; see R.L. FOWLER, *Early Greek Mythography*, Vol. II. Mythological and Philological Commentary (Oxford 2013) xi-xxi.

³⁵ While the story of Jephthah's daughter has frequently evoked comparison to the Iphigenia story due to their similarity in content, our decision instead to compare Iphigenia and the Aqedah was occasioned by the similarity in treatment which these stories have received over time; see also C.W. MARSHALL, "Death and the Maiden: Human Sacrifice in Euripides' *Andromeda*", *Not Sparing the Child. Human Sacrifice in the Ancient World and Beyond* (eds. V.D. ARBEL – P.C. BURNS – J.R.C. COUSLAND – R. MENKIS – D. NEUFELD) (Biblical Studies; London 2015) 132-133. For some of the previous studies on the connection between Jephthah's daughter and Iphigenia, see P.L. DAY, "From the Child is Born the Woman: The Story of Jephthah's Daughter", *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. P.L. DAY) (Minneapolis, MN 1989) 58-74; T.C. RÖMER, "Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?", *JSOT* 77 (1998) 27-38; S. NIDITCH, *Judges. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY 2008) 134; J. ROUX, "La danse de la fille de Jephté (Jg 11, 29-40) ou L'enfantement de la vengeance", *Semítica et Classica* 5 (2012) 29-42; J. SASSON, *Judges 1-12* (AB 6D; New Haven, CT 2013) 447; I. FINKELSTEIN, "The Old Jephthah Tale in Judges: Geographical and Historical Considerations", *Biblica* 97 (2016) 1-15. For another Greek parallel to the Jephthah story, see the story of Idomeneus as recounted in Apollodorus, *Library*.

³⁶ For instance, Agamemnon castigates Calchas at the beginning of the *Iliad*, calling him a "prophet of evil things" (*Il.* 1:106: μάντις κακῶν). He further complains that "you have never yet spoken good things to me / evil things are always dear to your mind to prophesy" (*Il.* 1:106-107). Nevertheless, in his five recountings of the murder of Agamemnon on his return home (*Od.* 1:28-43; 3:193-312; 4:512-547; 11:385-464; 24:19-97, 191-202), Homer never mentions Iphigenia's sacrifice as a motive for Clytemnestra's betrayal. It seems unlikely that this element, so central to the later Tragic tradition, was unknown to the author(s) of the Homeric epics.

³⁷ The name "Hesiod" is used as shorthand for the author of the *Catalogue of Women*, in the same way as it is used for *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, and as Homer is used for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The literature on the dating of Greek epic, both absolute and relative, is massive. Here, following the arguments of R. JANKO, *Homer, Hesiod, and the Hymns* (Cambridge 1982); M.L. WEST, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* (Oxford 1985); IDEM, "The Rise of the Greek Epic", *JHS* 108 (1988) 151-172; IDEM, "The Invention of Homer", *CQ* 49 (1999) 364-382; IDEM, "The Homeric Question Today", *Proceedings of*

of the tale, found in the fragmentarily preserved poem, *The Catalogue of Women* ³⁸. The fragment containing this episode recounts events from the marriage of Agamemnon to the death of Clytemnestra at the hands of Orestes in a terse eighteen hexameters ³⁹. Among the interesting features of this early version of the sacrifice of Iphigenia is the poet's lack of explanation for Artemis' demand ⁴⁰. While some features of Hesiod's version may be due to poetic compression, the lack of motivation seems to be a genuine part of the *Catalogue of Women*'s portrayal, as later versions offer a variety of reasons to explain Artemis' demand for the sacrifice. Hesiod's version thus calls to mind YHWH's unmotivated test of Abraham.

Perhaps the most important part of Hesiod's narrative is what happens at the moment of Iphigenia's sacrifice. We are told that rather than dying on the altar, only an εἶδωλον was present; Iphigenia herself was rescued by Artemis and immortalized, becoming the deity worshipped as "Artemis-by-the-road" ⁴¹. There is no good English equivalent for the term εἶδωλον, with the closest approximations being "phantom" or "form". In Homer, this particular term is used in two ways: in reference to the dead in the underworld (*Il.* 23:72, 104; *Od.* 11:83; 24:14; note its usage in parallel with ψυχή), and to refer to the image of a person with which others can interact, both in dialogue and in battle (*Il.* 5:449, 451; *Od.* 4:796, 824, 835). Given its usage in other Greek literature, an εἶδωλον seems to be indistinguishable from the actual person, and those that interact with them show no awareness that they are dealing with something other than what it appears to be ⁴². The appearance of this term in Hesiod indicates that, for all intents and purposes, those involved in the sacrifice thought that they had actually killed Iphigenia.

the American Philosophical Society 155 (2011) 383-393; IDEM, *The Epic Cycle. A Commentary on the Lost Epics of Troy* (Oxford 2013), we maintain the relative order of Homer before Hesiod, with Homer in the late-eighth to mid-seventh centuries and Hesiod in the seventh to early-sixth centuries. The Hesiodic *Catalogue* is also thought to be either within this time frame (JANKO) or, if later, no later than the end of the sixth century (WEST, *Catalogue*).

³⁸ Fr. 23a in R. MERKELBACH – M.L. WEST, *Fragmenta Hesiodae* (Oxford 1967) (Hereafter M-W).

³⁹ M-W fr. 23a.13-30.

⁴⁰ Other ways in which this early version differs from later accounts is the omission of the seer Calchas, the location where the sacrifice takes place being unnamed, and the attribution of the sacrifice to the Achaeans as a group rather than to Agamemnon specifically.

⁴¹ Ἄρτεμις εἰνοδίη. Pausanias, 1.43.1, interprets this goddess as Hecate, who is associated with Artemis in other texts. Philodemus (*Piet.* 24 GOMPERZ) attests to the sixth-century lyric poet Stesichorus' similar identification of Hecate with Iphigenia "following Hesiod."

⁴² In addition to the citations in the note above, see also the tradition about Helen not actually being at Troy as recounted in Stesichorus's *Palinode* (Plato, *Rep.* 586b) and Euripides, *Hel.* 33-34, 582.

The fragment's digression on the εἶδωλον and the fate of Iphigenia "herself" is grammatically awkward and has led scholars to suggest that these lines were a later addition to the *Catalogue* ⁴³. The original version of this passage would then have moved directly from the sacrifice of Iphigenia, with no salvific substitution, to the birth of Orestes and his matricide. That Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Elektra*, and Pindar's account of Agamemnon's murder presuppose a version of the story where the sacrifice takes place makes such a version plausible (Aeschylus, *Ag.* 184ff., 1412ff., 1521ff.; Sophocles, *El.* 563ff; Pindar, *P.* 11:22-23). Such a compositional history provides a parallel to the case of Genesis 22 as analyzed above: it originally ended in a child sacrifice but was later modified so that — through divine intervention — the sacrifice does not really take place.

The next link in the chain of early epic reports on Iphigenia comes from the *Cypria* ⁴⁴. This recounting of the gathering at Aulis, unlike Hesiod's, provides a reason for the sacrifice. According to the *Cypria*, Agamemnon killed a deer and boasted that his hunting skills surpassed those of Artemis herself; this caused Artemis to send bad weather and strand the Greek fleet at Aulis. The seer Calchas tells the Greeks that Iphigenia must be sacrificed in order to appease Artemis' anger ⁴⁵. And while the author of the *Cypria*, like the editorial expansion in the *Catalogue of Women*, includes the rescue of Iphigenia at the last moment, here she is replaced by a deer rather than an εἶδωλον ⁴⁶. This could possibly mean that those involved were under no illusion as to what was being sacrificed — the deer serves as Iphigenia's substitute.

To summarize the chain of development of Iphigenia's sacrifice in early Greek epic: Homer chooses not to recount the story; Hesiod presents a version where she is sacrificed, with a later editorial gloss stating that only her εἶδωλον was sacrificed; and the *Cypria* states that she was replaced by a deer and never actually sacrificed. This chain of tradition parallels the editorial history of Genesis 22 proposed above.

⁴³ F. SOLMSEN, "The Sacrifice of Agamemnon's Daughter in Hesiod's *Ehōeae*", *AJP* 102 (1981) 353-358. See also WEST, *Hesiodic Catalogue*, 134-135.

⁴⁴ The *Cypria* is only preserved in an extensive summary of its narrative by Proclus. The *Cypria* itself is post-Homeric and self-consciously "cyclic" in intention; it most likely dates to sometime in the sixth century, though it may have employed earlier material; see WEST, *Epic Cycle*, 55-65; B. CURRIE, "Cypria", *The Greek Epic Cycle and its Ancient Reception*. A Companion (eds. M. FANTUZZI – C. TSALAGIS) (Cambridge 2015) 281-305.

⁴⁵ The ruse of Iphigenia's marriage to Achilles, known from Euripides' later *Iphigenia at Aulis*, makes its first appearance here as well.

⁴⁶ On the irregularity of the sacrifice of a deer as opposed to the more regular domestic sacrifice, see J.N. BREMMER, "Sacrificing a Child in Ancient Greece", *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, 32-33.

III. EURIPIDES AND THE RECEPTION OF IPHIGENIA

As the previous survey of early epic makes clear, the story of Iphigenia existed as a part of the wider Hellenic mythos for centuries before the dramatist Euripides produced his tragedies in the fifth century. Euripides wrote two plays about this event, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (*IT*) and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (*IA*)⁴⁷. *IA* deals primarily with the events leading up to Iphigenia's sacrifice. After Iphigenia and her mother, Clytemnestra, unsuccessfully attempt to change the mind of Agamemnon, Iphigenia consents to her own sacrifice (Euripides, *IA* 1374-1401)⁴⁸, thus enabling the Greeks to proceed from Aulis to Troy. Clytemnestra predicts the eventual murder of her husband as Iphigenia walks off stage, presumably to her death⁴⁹. *IT* takes place long after Iphigenia has been whisked away from her pseudo-sacrifice; ironically she now serves as a priestess in the temple of Artemis in the midst of a barbaric (i.e. non-Greek) people who customarily sacrifice Greeks unfortunate enough to land on their shores (Euripides, *IT* 1-42). The largest portion of the play consists of interactions between Iphigenia and her brother Orestes as he seeks purification after murdering his mother in order to avenge the death of his father.

In addition to differing in their themes and narratives, the two plays also offer inconsistent accounts of Iphigenia's sacrifice. First is the matter of Artemis' motive. In *IA*, the seer Calchas reports that if Agamemnon wanted a favorable wind in order to sail forth to Troy, he would be required to sacrifice his daughter to Artemis (Euripides, *IA* 357-365). Agamemnon happily agrees to this, later regretting his assent. Curiously, the cause for this demand is never stated in the play. In *IT*, however, Euripides provides motivation for Artemis' demand of a human sacrifice. Iphigenia reports that Calchas had asserted that at some earlier time Agamemnon had vowed to Artemis that he would sacrifice the finest fruits of his house to her⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ The most probable date for *Iphigenia among the Taurians* is approximately 417-412 BCE based on the usage of meter. See M. CROPP – G.H. FICK, *Resolutions and Chronologies in Euripides*. The Fragmentary Tragedies (London 1985); P. KYRIAKOYA, *A Commentary on Euripides' Iphigenia Among the Taurians* (Berlin 2006) 40. *Iphigenia at Aulis* is thought to have been first performed in approximately 405 BCE, following the death of Euripides in 407/406 BCE. See P. MICHELAKIS, *Euripides*. *Iphigenia at Aulis* (London 2006) 83-84.

⁴⁸ The concept of the willing sacrificial victim extended even to animal sacrifices in Greek thought; see J. BREMMER, "Greek Normative Animal Sacrifice", *A Companion to Greek Religion* (ed. D. OGDEN) (Malden, MA 2007) 135.

⁴⁹ See N. MICHELINI, *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition* (Madison, WI 1987) 70-95, for a discussion of how Euripides drew on prior Iphigenia tradition.

⁵⁰ Cf. Exod 22,28-29 for a similar collocation of agricultural offering and child and animal sacrifice. Scholarly examinations of the Jephthah and Iphigenia traditions (cf. note 34) frequently mark this as a similarity. However, we believe that the circumstances and content of the vows are different enough to invite doubt about whether they can be profitably compared.

Unbeknownst to him, it would be on the shores of Aulis en route to Troy that Artemis would come to collect her payment in the form of Iphigenia (Euripides, *IT* 10-23).

The inclusion of individual details in each narrative which are absent from the other invites questions about what Euripides expected his audience to already know about the story and Artemis' motivation for demanding Iphigenia's sacrifice ⁵¹. Regardless of how one addresses this issue, it should be noted that in *IA* Euripides had an opportunity to provide a motivation for the sacrifice which drives the entire narrative of his work and yet chose not to include it. Even if this were done for dramatic reasons, it brings the narrative of the play in line with both the older Hesiodic version and the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22, in which no reason is given for the respective gods' demands.

Then there is the moment of the sacrifice itself. The two plays envision dramatically different fates for Iphigenia. At the climactic moment of *IA*, Iphigenia walks off stage alone and proceeds willingly to her sacrifice. This self-sacrifice is framed as Iphigenia's choice, something that will bring her recognition from the gods as well as bring salvation and victory for the Greeks (Euripides, *IA* 1467-1474) ⁵². The chorus sings her praises as she moves out of the view of the audience, claiming that Troy would be brought low due to her decision and that her glory would remain forever (Euripides, *IA* 1530-1629). However, the death of Iphigenia is not actually described in *IA*. In a manner similar to our proposal for an earlier version of the narrative in Genesis 22, *IA*, at least as it was originally staged, ended with a sacrifice occurring outside of the audience's view.

IT, on the other hand, mimics the explanation given in the *Cypria* that Iphigenia was replaced with a deer in the moments before her death (Euripides, *IT* 25-30). However, in Euripides' play, those who were present at the sacrifice believed that Iphigenia was actually killed, thus combining the Hesiodic εἶδωλον with the *Cypria*'s substitute. In fact, the narrative of *IT* is driven by the assumption that Orestes killed Clytemnestra for the murder of his father, which was itself motivated by the death of Iphigenia at the hands of Agamemnon. Euripides' version both allows for the continued life of Iphigenia and preserves the motive underlying the Orestes cycle, as depicted in such works as the plays of Aeschylus. Euripides' play thus embodies the tensions we have explored in relation to Iphigenia's

⁵¹ See A.O. HULTON, "Euripides and the Iphigenia Legend", *Mnemosyne* 15 (1962) 364-368, for the complications in Euripides' accounts and how they interact with other versions of the Iphigenia story.

⁵² For further exploration of Iphigenia's motivation for assenting to her sacrifice, see D. BACALEXI, "Personal, Paternal, Patriotic: The Threefold Sacrifice of Iphigenia in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*", *Humanitas* 68 (2016) 51-76.

sacrifice in various stages of Hellenic literature. Her death was deeply implicated in enough Greek tradition that he could not efface it, yet the act was distasteful enough that Euripides and others found a way around it ⁵³.

In a final twist in the development of the story of Iphigenia in Euripides' plays, a later editor added an appendix to *IA* in which Iphigenia is revealed to have survived her ordeal ⁵⁴. A messenger arrives and announces that, as she was going to the altar, Iphigenia was replaced by a deer and whisked away by Artemis. This is the only version of the story where it is clear that the participants in the sacrifice are aware that they did not kill Iphigenia. The scene is reminiscent of the miraculous revelation of a nearby ram after Abraham is told to halt the sacrifice of his son (Gen 22,13). The addition of this ending recapitulates the editorial histories proposed for both Genesis 22 and Hesiod's *Catalogue*. The changes made to the Iphigenia story in both the Hesiodic and Euripidean corpora point toward a growing Greek discomfort with the sacrifice of Iphigenia ⁵⁵. Although not in the same terms, Israelite literature reflects a similar rejection of child sacrifice.

IV. THE REJECTION OF CHILD SACRIFICE IN ISRAELITE AND GREEK LITERATURE

As discussed above, the original narrative of Genesis 22 possibly ended with the death of Isaac. But at some point in the tradition-history of the Aqedah, this was no longer felt to be acceptable and the story was changed, creating the received version. Unlike the variety of literary representations of the Iphigenia story in the Greek corpus, we are instead left only with this single, received form of the text. However, there are many other places in which a shift in attitudes towards the practice of child sacrifice is visible in biblical literature.

For example, the non-Priestly legal texts that allowed for child sacrifice (Exod 13,1-2; 22,28-29), while not directly changed, have been combined

⁵³ In both *Iphigenia among the Taurians* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Euripides exposes discomfort with child sacrifice by having various characters refer to the act as "murder" (φρονέω, φονεύω) rather than "sacrifice" (σφάζω, θύω).

⁵⁴ HULTON, "Euripides", 367-368, contends that a fragment attributed to Euripides by Aelian demonstrates that the original ending of the play still had Iphigenia's replacement by a deer. For a brief summary of the consensus view of the editorial history of *IA*, see N.A. WEISS, "The Antiphonal Ending of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1475-1532)", *CP* 109 (2014) 119-129.

⁵⁵ This tale continued to pack a polemic punch; in the first century, Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura* 1:80-101) uses Iphigenia as a parade case for criticizing not only child sacrifice but also religion as a whole. While Lucretius ignores the versions where Iphigenia is rescued, his emphasis on her actual sacrifice can be attributed to the argument he is making.

with other legal materials that affect and control the interpretation of those texts. This can most clearly be seen in Exodus 13, where the entire chapter seems to double back on itself, creating two almost identical passages in 13,1-10 and 13,11-16 ⁵⁶. The major difference between these two panels is that the second one includes a clause allowing or requiring the redemption of human firstborns. A similar interpretative relationship may also exist between the redemption clause of Exod 34,18-20 and the requirement to give all firstborns to YHWH in Exod 22,28-29.

This type of editing, which is largely passive, was only one type of response to the idea of child sacrifice. A more direct response is seen in the Priestly and Deuteronomic law codes, both later than the material in Exodus 13, which condemn child sacrifice in the strongest possible terms. They further distance themselves from the practice by attributing such actions to the nations that Israel was supposed to have extirpated upon entering the land (Lev 18,21; 20,2-5; Deut 12,31; 18,9-12) ⁵⁷.

Jeremiah, writing in the late seventh and early sixth centuries, takes the polemic even further. In a refutation of past tradition, Jeremiah claims that people are sacrificing their children even though "I [YHWH] did not command it; it did not come up on my heart" (Jer 7,31) ⁵⁸. This assertion resonates with Euripides' *IT*, where Iphigenia, in reflecting on the human sacrifices over which she officiates, denies that the gods partook of Tantalus' sacrifice of his son ⁵⁹: "But the ones here [the Taurians], being murderers themselves,/ I think they attribute baseness to the goddess" (Euripides, *IT* 389-390) ⁶⁰. It is clear that while child sacrifice may have once been a normative practice within ancient Israelite religion, it was rejected, at least by some elite, by the late seventh century. Though both the Hellenic and Israelite worlds no longer took part in the practice, the language and stories of the ritual remained and resonated with the audiences of prophets and playwrights alike.

⁵⁶ See note 16 above for a more detailed discussion regarding the compositional history of Exodus 13.

⁵⁷ The attribution of such practices to the "other", whether one's neighbors or the people of the distant past, is common. The Greek, Israelite, and Phoenician materials on child sacrifice all attest to this apologetic impulse in one way or another.

⁵⁸ Similarly, Jer 19,5; 32,35. For a more detailed study of Jeremiah's rejection of tradition, see HALPERN, "False Torah". Jeremiah's approach contrasts with that of Ezekiel who admits that YHWH did in fact command child sacrifice, but only as a punishment for Israel's infidelity (Ezek 20,25-26).

⁵⁹ For a similar rejection of the story of the gods' feasting on Pelops, see the roughly contemporaneous Pindar, *Ol.* 1.35-55. For a similar conception of child sacrifice as food for the gods, see Ezek 16,20.

⁶⁰ Iphigenia concludes: "For I think that not one of the gods is evil". This calls to mind Xenophanes' similar critique of Homer and Hesiod (fr. 11).

V. CONCLUSION: EAST AND MORE EAST

The treatment of the stories of Isaac and Iphigenia show striking similarities. Both stories of child sacrifice are embedded in narratives about formative moments in Israelite and Greek history, respectively. Both stories have an editorial and reception history that provides evidence for an increasing discomfort with child sacrifice and for the unmotivated divine demand for it. Both the Aqedah and early Greek epic accounts of Iphigenia's sacrifice share a similar trajectory whereby later versions of the story provide a substitute for the sacrificial victim, indicating an emerging attitude of embarrassment across the passage of time.

These versions, in which no child sacrifice actually takes place, became the normative iteration for both cultures. Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* presents the same cycle in miniature, with the play originally ending with Iphigenia walking off stage to her death, to which a later editor added an appendix recounting her rescue. Other statements in biblical and Hellenic literature confirm the presence of an increasingly antagonistic view towards child sacrifice, specifically those stories involving the gods' demand for it ⁶¹.

We wish to affirm once more that this article does not intend to suggest that the stories of Isaac and Iphigenia are literarily dependent upon one another, nor does it posit a literary connection behind the re-editing that rescued them from their earlier fates. However, the treatment of these texts as presented above indicates that these similar changes are evidence of a shift in views towards child sacrifice and its literary representations in both Israel and Greece.

This similarity of tradition highlights another point about the ancient eastern Mediterranean, including Greece — it is in many ways distinct from Mesopotamian tradition. When our meager remains of Phoenician literature, as preserved in Porphyry's and Eusebius' quotations of Philo of Byblos ⁶², are included alongside the Israelite and Greek material, they

⁶¹ This feature marks another difference between the story of Iphigenia's sacrifice and that of Jephthah's daughter, as the opinion and desire of YHWH are nowhere discussed by the narrator in Judges 11. A similar lack of comment about child sacrifice that has not been commanded by YHWH can also be seen in 2 Kings 3. Both Jeremiah 7 and Ezekiel 20 also choose to focus on the issue of YHWH's *demand* for child sacrifice, rather than on the practice itself. One might speculate that the Judahite controversy over child sacrifice was not about whether it should be done, but over whether YHWH commanded it.

⁶² For the issues surrounding the use of Philo as a witness to Phoenician religion, see H.W. ATTRIDGE – R.A. ODEN, *Philo of Byblos*. The Phoenician History (CBQMS 9; Washington, D.C. 1981) 3-9; A. BAUMGARTEN, *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos* (Leiden 1981) 1-7. Philo claims to have based his writings on the work of an ancient sage named Sanchuniathon, whose date and very existence are a matter of controversy. J. BARR, "Philo of Byblos and His 'Phoenician History'", *BJRL* 57 (1974) 17-68, offers the most thorough

offer a striking contrast to Mesopotamian literature vis-a-vis child sacrifice. Despite the relatively large size of the extant cuneiform literary corpus, we do not have an equivalent Sumerian or Akkadian tale of child sacrifice. In other words, regardless of how one explains the similarity in the treatment of the Isaac and Iphigenia narratives, stories of child sacrifice and the controversies they engendered stand as a peculiar feature of the eastern Mediterranean *koine*, distinct from the aspects of culture shared with the more eastern parts of the ancient Near East. More frequently integrating the Hellenic corpus into future analyses will provide us with a richer understanding of how the eastern Mediterranean contrasted with the cultural world it shared with Mesopotamia. As Martin West astutely observed: “As it was, the great civilizations lay in the East, and from the first, Greece’s face was turned towards the Sun. Greece is part of Asia; Greek literature is a Near Eastern literature”⁶³.

University of Notre Dame
Theology Department
130 Malloy Hall
Notre Dame, IN 46556

Raleigh HETH

University of Georgia
Department of Religion
290 S. Jackson Street
Peabody Hall, Room 3
Athens, GA 30602

T.E. KELLEY

rejoinder to the twentieth-century rush to see confirmation of Philo’s sources in discoveries from Ugarit. For a critique of Barr’s hyper-skepticism of Philo and more detailed discussion about the claim for ancient sources being part of the Hellenistic historiographic tradition within which Philo produced his work, see R.A. ODEN, “Philo of Byblos and Hellenistic Historiography”, *PEQ* 110 (1978) 115-126. Regardless of how old the Phoenician sources behind Philo’s work are, his history is representative of Phoenician views and mythology by virtue of being by a Phoenician with the explicitly expressed goal of refuting Greek views on certain matters (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 1.9.27; 1.10.40-41). For an analysis of Philo’s role as an expounder of Phoenician tradition in his own time, see H.I. MACADAM, “Philo of Byblos and the *Phoenician History*: Ethnicity and Culture in Hadrianic Lebanon”, *Archaeology of the Roman Empire* (ed. N.J. HIGHAM) (Oxford 2001) 189-203. For Philo’s place in Phoenician literature at large, see C. LÓPEZ-RUIZ, “Phoenician Literature”, *The Oxford Handbook of the Phoenician and Punic Mediterranean* (eds. C. LÓPEZ-RUIZ – B.R. DOAK) (Oxford 2017) 257-270. The debate over child sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible has also frequently been brought into conversation with the archaeological evidence for such a practice among the Phoenicians; see opposing views in P. XELLA, “Introduction: Tophet as a Historical Problem”, *The Tophet in the Phoenician Mediterranean* (ed. P. XELLA) (SEL 29-30; Verona 2013) iii-x; J.H. SCHWARTZ, et al., “Bones, Teeth, and Estimating Age of Perinates: Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice Revisited”, *Antiquity* 86 (2012) 738-745; IDEM, “Two Tales of One City: Data, Inference, and Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice”, *Antiquity* 91 (2017) 442-454.

⁶³ M.L. WEST, *Theogony*. Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary (Oxford 1966) 30-31.

SUMMARY

This paper explores the manner in which narratives of child sacrifice were received in Israelite and Greek literature through an examination of the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22 and the sacrifice of Iphigenia in early Greek epic and the plays of Euripides. In both cases, there is evidence for an increasing discomfort with the notion of child sacrifice. Our analysis suggests that Israel and Greece shared a distinctive eastern Mediterranean perspective with regards to child sacrifice that can be contrasted with that of Mesopotamia.

ABOUT COINS AND KINGSHIP IN LXX PROVERBS 25,4-5

A very interesting aspect of the Greek translation of Proverbs is the way the translator adapts the Hebrew text to his Jewish Hellenistic and Ptolemaic context and audience, so that LXX Proverbs is rightly considered the freest translation among the books of the Septuagint¹. The verses analysed in this study show the relevance of the Ptolemaic social and economic dimensions for the translator, who moves away from the image contained in the Hebrew text revolving around the metallurgy of silver. The Septuagint version draws a lesson from minting coins, a much more relevant activity and responsibility for a Hellenistic king.

In order to illustrate the main changes between the Hebrew and the Greek, I first discuss the two versions and then explore the modern translations of the Septuagint as well as those provided in a couple of monographs and lexica. With few exceptions, most works fail to render properly the meaning of some crucial Greek words. While I propose a new translation, I also try to provide the contextual reasons for it by showing how the relevant terms appear in the Greek sources. In the last paragraph, I argue that the data on the Ptolemaic economic system that we have corroborates my proposed translation and understanding of LXX Prov 25,4-5.

I. ANCIENT VERSIONS AND MODERN TRANSLATIONS OF PROV 25,4-5

MT Prov 25,4-5

הגו סיגים מכסף ויצא לצרף כלי:
הגו רשע לפני־מלך ויכון בצדק כסאו:

Blow away the dross from the silver, and it will come out as a vessel for the refiner.

Remove the wicked from before the king, and his throne will be established in justice.

The Hebrew text of Prov 25,4 is straightforward. The author of the proverb takes his cue from the domain of metallurgy to craft an image and set it in parallel to the one occurring in the following verse: as a metalworker

¹ See, for instance, the case discussed in V. OLIVERO, “A Genealogy of Lust: The Use of Hesiod’s *Theogony* in the LXX Translation of the Book of Proverbs”, *Textus* 30 (2021) 28-42.

cleanses the silver from its dross through smelting in order to obtain a vessel, so the wicked must be removed from before the king so that the throne can be firmly established ².

LXX Prov 25,4-5

τύπτε ἀδόκιμον ἀργύριον καὶ καθαρισθήσεται καθαρὸν ἅπαν.
κτεῖνε ἀσεβεῖς ἐκ προσώπου βασιλέως, καὶ κατορθώσει ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ
ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ.

“Strike the unrefined silver, and everything pure will be purified.
Cut off the impious from the presence of the king, and his throne will be
established in righteousness” (NETS) ³.

“Schlage ungeläutertes Silber, und es wird zu ganz reinem gereinigt werden.
Töte die Gottlosen aus dem Antlitz des Königs, und sein Thron wird durch
Gerechtigkeit aufrecht sein” (SD) ⁴.

“Fais disparaître l’argent sans valeur, et celui qui est vraiment pur sera purifié.
Mets à mort les impies, hors de la présence du roi, et son trône se redressera
dans la justice” (BA) ⁵.

A few remarks on the translation technique adopted by the Greek translator are here on point. The verb הנה “to remove” is very rare and occurs only in Isa 27,8, Prov 25,4, and Prov 25,5 ⁶. The Greek equivalents used in LXX Proverbs for this verb are τύπτω (Prov 25,4), which is usually employed to render חלק (hi.), כרת (hi.), נכה, נגף, (hi.), and κτείνω (Prov 25,5). While it is possible that the translator gave two different nuances, depending on the context, to the Hebrew meaning “to remove”, it is also possible that he played with the similarity between הנה and הכו (not an unlikely option, given the many examples in which the translator of Proverbs adopted the meaning of roots that closely resemble those really found in the Hebrew text).

The adjective ἀδόκιμος is used only twice in the LXX, both times to translate סיגים (Prov 25,4 and Isa 1,22). Interestingly, in both verses סיגים appears in relationship with כסף, which is translated as ἀργύριον. The

² Although the major Hebrew lexica derive הנה (II) “to remove” and הנה (I) “to utter, speak” from two different roots, “to remove” may also be a semantic extension of “to utter, speak”: from the basic meaning of “to emit air”, through “to blow away” comes the meaning of “to remove by blowing” and, hence, simply “to remove”. As for the form ויציא, it could be emended into a yiqtol ויצא (cf. also the following ויכון, the Greek use of the future καθαρισθήσεται, and Prov 22,10 for the sequence imperative — weyiqtol with ויצא).

³ J. COOK, “Proverbs”, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (eds. A. PIETERSMA – B.G. WRIGHT) (New York 2007) 643.

⁴ H.-W. JÜNLING – H. VON LIPS – R. SCORALICK, “Die Sprüche”, *Septuaginta Deutsch* (eds. W. KRAUS – M. KARRER) (Stuttgart 2010) 970. For the translation “ungeläutertes” the two options “ungeprüftes” and “nicht erprobtes” are provided in a footnote.

⁵ D.-M. D’HAMONVILLE, *La Bible d’Alexandrie: Les Proverbes* (Paris 2000) 310.

⁶ See also my comment above (n. 1) for a slightly different understanding.

fact that ἀργύριον occurs without a preceding preposition in the LXX (as opposed to Heb. מכסף) should not surprise, as the words and syntax employed in the Greek text require that it be so.

As for ἅπαν, it can easily be explained with כלו instead of כלי, due to the similarity of < י > and < ו >. No vessel is necessary for the process described in the Greek version.

Two more words remain to be analyzed, ויצא and לצרף. In this verse, the root צרף is translated with καθαρίζω⁷, which is derived from καθαρός. The same translation is found elsewhere only in Dan 11,35 (LXX). The use of καθαρός or צרף may have influenced the translation of ויצא, which did not have the same semantic range in Greek. After all, יצא, when describing movement, is often freely translated in Proverbs, depending on the context: ἐξέρχομαι (7,15), ἐκφεύγω (12,13), συνεξέρχομαι (22,10), προσπίπτω (25,8), ἐκστρατεύω (30,27). Its usage here as a metallurgical technical term allows even greater freedom for the translator. I therefore conclude that both the potential semantic overlapping between צרף and *καθαρ- and the different imagery in the Greek verse justify the translator's choice in terms of vocabulary.

As for the syntax, the second part of the verse may be influenced by the use of καθαρός in Leviticus, where it often appears as a formulaic verdict at the end of the verse describing a process of purification (the verb used is καθαρίζω): καθαρός ἐστίν/ἐσται⁸. Since the verse in Proverbs both depends on the Hebrew text and is ultimately poetry, the copula is unnecessary both in Hebrew and Greek. I prefer a translation with the future tense, because of καθαρισθήσεται, which places the action, and therefore its outcome, in the future.

The English and French translations do not seem to make sense in the second part of the verse. How can something that is already pure (or really pure, as the *Bible d'Alexandrie* puts it) be purified? The *Septuaginta Deutsch* version attempts a less literal translation and envisions a purification process. At the same time, it is hard to understand how striking silver could purify it. In this sense, the English and German translations probably fail to grasp the correct meaning of τύπτει in this context. D'Hamonville, who produced the French version, seems to recognize the complications that such translation entails and favours the adoption of a variant reading attested in a series of manuscripts, i.e., κρύπτει, even though it is most likely the result of textual corruption. I do not find this solution persuasive.

⁷ On the verb καθαρίζω, see G. DORIVAL, "'Dire en grec les choses juives'. Quelques choix lexicaux du Pentateuque de la Septante", *Revue des Études Grecques* 109 (1996) 542-543.

⁸ Cf. Lev 13,6.13.17.34.37; 14,7-8, always referring to purification from skin diseases.

Notwithstanding the apparently obscure meaning of the Greek text and the struggle of the main translations to render the verse in a meaningful way, attention to the vocabulary employed should lead to a coherent translation of Lxx Prov 25,4.

In the first place, the word ἀργύριον is best understood if left untranslated or if translated with “silver coin”, rather than with “silver”. In fact, “silver” is but a secondary meaning of ἀργύριον, which first and foremost referred to a type of coin ⁹. Once this primary meaning of ἀργύριον is recognised, then it becomes clear that also τύπτε and ἀδόκιμος may have different meanings from those usually attributed to them in the modern translations. They are best understood as technical terms that belong to the sphere of coin minting. Quite interestingly, D’Hamonville provides in a note to the verse the correct translations for both τύπτε and ἀδόκιμος, although he does not adopt them in his version:

25, 4 ‘fais disparaître’, *krúpte*: avec certains manuscrits; A. Rahlfs *túpte*, que l’on ne pourrait comprendre qu’à partir du sens technique de ‘frapper une monnaie’ (LSJ, s.v., I, 5), c’est-à-dire dans ce contexte ‘remettre à fondre’. ~ ‘sans valeur’: l’adjectif *adókimos*, classique à propos de pièces de monnaie, n’est utilisé dans la LXX qu’ici et en Is 1, 22 (même contexte, même substrat hébreu, *sîgîm*, ‘les scories’) ¹⁰.

One finds a similar remark on the occurrence of τύπτω in Prov 25,4 in Muraoka’s *Greek-English Lexicon to the Septuagint*, where the meaning given is that of “hit, strike metal so as to mint a coin”. More recently, Ghormley has pointed out that, contrary to the use of ἄργυρος, the term ἀργύριον is employed for “silver material that has an economic function”, for which he provides a series of examples ¹¹. Finally, in his monograph on LXX Proverbs, Cook translates the Greek expression ἀδόκιμον ἀργύριον occurring in this verse as “unrefined coin (money)” ¹².

Having suggested more precise meanings for ἀργύριον, τύπτω and ἀδόκιμος, I would propose the following translation for Prov 25,4-5:

“Strike the *argyrion* (i.e., silver coin) which is not legal tender (i.e., valueless money), and it will be purified: it will be completely pure!
Kill the impious ones from before the king, and his throne will stand established in justice”.

⁹ Cf. the entry in LSJ.

¹⁰ D’HAMONVILLE, *Proverbes*, 311.

¹¹ Cf. J.T. GHORMLEY, “Coining Silver: The Translation of הַכֶּסֶף in the Septuagint”, *The Vocabulary of the Septuagint in its Hellenistic Background* (eds. E. BONS – P. POUCHELLE – D. SCIALABBA) (Tübingen 2019) 42-55, here 43.

¹² J. COOK, *The Septuagint of Proverbs — Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs?* (Leiden 2000) 305-306.

This translation diverges from the Hebrew text, but it can be fully supported by the evidence found in Greek sources. In what follows, I will flesh out with some examples the meanings that I have attributed to these crucial terms of LXX Prov 25,4-5.

II. THE GREEK SOURCES

A good place with which to begin is Heron's *De mensuris*, a tractate written in the second half of the first century CE. Chapter 60 (Περὶ σταθμῶν) lists and describes the different weights in use at that time. The following excerpts introduce the readers to numismatic terminology and the relationship between coins and kings ¹³.

Heron, *De mensuris* 60.11:

[...] ἦν δὲ καὶ ἕτερος ὀβολὸς ἐξ ἀργύρου τυπτόμενον νόμισμα, ὃ ἦν λεπτότατον, ὀγδοηκοστὸν δὲ τῆς Γο [...]

“[...] and there was also another *obolos*, a coin minted from silver, which was very small, 1/8 of an ounce [...]”

Heron, *De mensuris* 60.12:

Ὁ δὲ χαλκὸς ἀργύριον ἐστι τετυπωμένον, ὅθεν παρὰ Ἀλεξανδρεῦσι τὰ ἀργύρια χαλκινὰ καλεῖται.

“The *chalkos* is a minted *argyron*, which is why the *argyria* are called *chalkina* by the Alexandrians”.

Heron, *De mensuris* 60.15:

Πολλοὶ δὲ τύποι ἀργυρίων τὸ πάλαι, οὓς νομμοὶ ἐκάλουν ἀπὸ Νούμμα, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὸ νόμισμα

“In antiquity there were many types of *argyria*, which were called *nummoi* from Numma, after whom also the *nomisma* (is named)”.

Heron, *De mensuris* 60.23:

Παρά τισι δὲ καὶ ὀβολὸς νόμισμα ἀπὸ τοῦ παρὰ τῶν βασιλέων ἐν τούτῳ νομίσαι τὸν κόσμον διοικεῖσθαι. Ἀργύριον καλοῦμεν διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἀργύρου τετύφθαι.

“But by some also the *obolos* (is named) *nomisma*, because they think that the world is administered by the kings with it. We call (it) *argyron*, because it is minted from silver (*argyros*)”.

What emerges from these passages is that, according to Heron, the term ἀργύριον derives from the fact that coins were struck (τετύφθαι) from

¹³ J.L. HEIBERG, *Heronis Alexandrini, Opera quae supersunt omnia*, volumen V (Stuttgart 1914) 212-215.

silver (ἐξ ἀργύρου) and that there were different kinds of obols, one of which ἐξ ἀργύρου τυπτόμενον. The ἀργύρια were of different sorts (τύποι, same root as τύπτω) in antiquity, and they could be turned and struck into different currencies, such as the χαλκός which was nothing but ἀργύριον τετυπωμένον. Coins emanated from the central power (i.e., the king), and this is reflected both in the popular etymology of νόμισμα provided by Heron (who links it to the Roman king and reformer Numa) and by the fact that it was a widespread opinion that the king could administer the world through coins (cf. Par. 23).

Another interesting occurrence of τύπτω in relation to ἀργύριον, although not related to minting coins, is to be found in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, vv. 623-624 ¹⁴.

Αἶα. δίκαιος ὁ λόγος· κἄν τι πηρώσω γέ σοι
τὸν παῖδα τύπτων, τᾶργύριόν σοι κείσεται.

Aeacus: "Fair enough. And, of course, if my beating maims your servant, the compensation will be credited to your account".

Xanthias, the other speaker, has just suggested a panoply of means whereby Aeacus could punish his (Xanthias') slave. Aeacus decides to go with the beating, a much softer punishment than the ones proposed by Xanthias. If, by any chance, the slave is mutilated, Aeacus will have to deposit (κεῖμαι) a sum of ἀργύριον, equal to the damages inflicted. What is relevant in this passage and, so far as I am aware, what has gone unnoticed, is that there may be a wordplay on technical terms otherwise used for minting. The striking (τύπτω) of his slave produces ἀργύριον for Xanthias. This very same image may also lie behind Lxx Prov 25,4. In the play, the beating of the slave might produce income and hence benefit his master. In Lxx Proverbs, this image and its literal and non-literal meanings are split into two verses, reshaping the Hebrew parallelism: in order to make his authority firm, in v. 4 the king should strike coins, whereas in v. 5 he should strike the impious. It would not be far-fetched to think of a direct reference to Aristophanes' work, given the number of allusions to classical literature that the translator of Proverbs makes.

Another illuminating passage comes again from *Frogs* vv. 718-726 ¹⁵.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

πολλάκις γ' ἡμῖν ἔδοξεν ἡ πόλις πεπονθέναι
ταῦτόν εἰς τε τῶν πολιτῶν τοὺς καλοὺς τε *κάγαθούς*
εἰς τε τᾶρχαῖον νόμισμα καὶ τὸ καινὸν χρυσίον.

¹⁴ Aristophanes, *Frogs* 623-624 (LCL 180; Cambridge, MA 2002).

¹⁵ Aristophanes, *Frogs* 718-726 (LCL 180; Cambridge, MA 2002).

οὔτε γὰρ τούτοισιν οὐδὲ οὐ κεκιβδηλευμένοις,
 ἀλλὰ καλλίστοις ἀπάντων, ὥς δοκεῖ, νομισμάτων
 καὶ μόνοις ὀρθῶς κοπεῖσι καὶ κεκωδωνισμένοις
 ἔν τε τοῖς Ἑλλήσι καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροισι πανταχοῦ
 χρώμεθ' οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ τούτοις τοῖς πονηροῖς χαλκίοις
 χθές τε καὶ πρώην κοπεῖσι τῷ κακίστῳ κόμματι.

“It’s often struck us that the city deals with its fine upstanding citizens just as with the old coinage and the new gold. Though both of these are unalloyed, indeed considered the finest of all coins, the only ones minted true and tested everywhere among Greeks and barbarians alike, we make no use of them; instead we use these crummy coppers, struck just yesterday or the day before with a stamp of the lowest quality”.

The ἀρχαῖον νόμισμα was made of silver from the mines of Laurium. After the Spartans established a garrison at Decelea in 413 BC, silver-mining became impossible for Athens. In 406 BC they struck gold coins from the gold dedications on the Acropolis (τὸ καινὸν χρυσίον in Aristophanes’ passage). Both kinds of coins were unadulterated (οὐ κεκιβδηλευμένοις) and very highly valued, but they were used only for imports and to pay mercenaries. Around the same time (the *Frogs* was written in 405 BC), the Athenians began to strike the silver-plated bronze coins that were scorned by Aristophanes (πονηροῖς χαλκίοις) and to which he compares the scum of the Athenian society. It is interesting to see that, whereas this latter kind of coinage, a contaminated and inferior version of the pure silver and gold coins, is described as χθές τε καὶ πρώην κοπεῖσι (κόπτω is another technical term for the striking of coins), the former and more respectable kinds of coins were ὀρθῶς κοπεῖσι, i.e., struck in the proper way, the original ones. Plato, too, in *Phaedo* 69a 9-10, speaks about νόμισμα ὀρθόν, true coinage, the kind of coins one can use to carry out a right exchange, ὀρθή [...] ἀλλαγή. In this regard, I find interesting that Lxx Prov 25,5 translates נִי (ni.) with κατορθόω. This verb is used for נִי also in Lxx Prov 4,18; 12,3; 12,19 (in addition to other occurrences in the Greek Old Testament). It is also found in relationship with the king’s ἀρχή in Herodotus 1.120.5, in the words uttered by the Magi (Polybius 3.30.2 also comes close to this meaning). In Lxx Prov 25,5 the translator might have played on words once again to tie this verse to the preceding one. The Hebrew parallelism did not work anymore in the translation, and a new relationship was created based on a wordplay attested in Aristophanes and, maybe, in current use. The translator now seals this relationship between the two verses and the new meaning using an expression found in relation to coins in Aristophanes’ *Frogs*. How can the throne be made firm? Not only through the killing of the impious, but also through the minting of valuable currency.

The sound of καθαρίζω and κατορθόω is a further element that ties the two verses together.

Furthermore, Aristophanes' verses indirectly contribute to understanding the term ἀδόκιμος. *Scholium* 725 to the *Frogs* glosses τοῖς πονηροῖς χαλκίοις with τοῖς ἀδοκίμοις καὶ μεμιγμένοις χαλκῷ, ὥς ἐπὶ νομισμάτων¹⁶. This use of ἀδόκιμος is attested many times in Greek sources. Plato, *Leges* 742a 5-6, contrasts the νόμισμα which is ἀδόκιμον with the ἔντιμον, i.e., "accepted in exchange". Aristotle (*Oeconomicus* 1347a) reports an episode which took place in Hippias' times. The tyrant, having rendered the Athenian currency ἀδόκιμον, bought the coins at an established rate (τιμή). Instead of striking new coins by stamping (κόψαι) a new image (χαρακτήρ) on them, he re-issued the same coinage (τὸ αὐτὸ ἀργύριον), surely for him at a more convenient price than the one he had bought the coins for. Sometime later, Philo, in *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* 162, describes the difference between a wise man and God and a valueless and good tetradrachm¹⁷:

[..] ὅτι ὁ σοφὸς λέγεται μὲν θεὸς τοῦ ἄφρονος, πρὸς ἀλήθειαν δὲ οὐκ ἔστι θεός, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τὸ ἀδόκιμον τετράδραχμόν ἐστιν τετράδραχμον· [..]

"That the wise man is said to be a god to the foolish man, but that in reality he is not God, just as a counterfeit four-drachma piece is not a tetradrachm".

In Epictetus' *Discourses* (1.7.7 and 4.5.17) there are also two interesting passages. Plutarch, in *De amicorum multitudine* 94D, compares bad friends with valueless coins. What is most interesting here is that coins (νόμισμα), in order to be deemed valueless (ἀδόκιμον), are put to the test (ἐλεγχόμενον). This language of testing is adapted and used for friendship as well: this can be rightly tried (ὀρθῶς ... ἐξετασθεῖς), although it may happen that friendship is forced without being tried (ἀνεξετάστως). Similarly, in *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* 49D-E, Plutarch adopts coinage terms to describe friends. That which is not trustworthy (ἀβέβαιον) and adulterated or spurious (κίβδηλον, cf. Aristophanes' verses above), cannot be exchanged (ἀντικαταλλαγῇ) for that which is trustworthy (βέβαιον). This is applicable to coins as well, which must be examined (δεδοκιμασμένον) and tested (ἐλεγχόμενον).

I find a striking parallel between the use of the verb ἐλέγχω for coins and the occurrence of the adjective ἀνεξέλεγκτος in Prov 25,3, only here used to translate רָקִי. I have already illustrated how Prov 25,4 builds a new kind of parallelism with v. 5. The following relationship with v. 3 may not

¹⁶ M. CHANTRY, *Scholia vetera in Aristophanis Ranas* (Groningen 1999) 100.

¹⁷ Philo, *The Worse is Wont to Attack the Better* 162 (LCL 227; Cambridge, MA 1929).

be casual: we have already seen that the adverb ἀνεξετάστως, which has the same structure of ἀνεξέλεγκτος, is used by Plutarch in a context that has to do with coins. The unexpected choice of this rare adjective might be due to the technical meaning that ἐλέγχω can take when referred to coins, and it can therefore be influenced by the translation of v. 4. Kings' hearts are beyond testing, unlike coins. We have already seen in Plato's *Leges* that a νόμισμα can be either ἀδόκιμον or ἔντιμον. The verb τιμάω can be used without the *genitivus pretii* and mean "estimate, value at a certain price"¹⁸.

At this point, one wonders whether in Prov 25,2 the sentence δόξα δὲ βασιλέως τιμᾷ πράγματα ("but the glory of a king honors action", NETS) may have an economic dimension. Jäger suggested that the translator might have read הוֹקֵר, the Hiphil of יָקַר, instead of חָקַר. It is interesting to observe that the meaning of יָקַר (Hiph.) in Mishnaic Hebrew is "to rise in value", and one of the meanings of the Aramaic noun יָקַר is "price, value". As for v. 4, the translator might have misread or misheard the Hebrew word. Or, in both cases, the translator may have willingly changed the meaning of the verse, giving a new economic dimension, by playing with the resemblance of sounds of the Hebrew words (הוֹקֵר – חָקַר / הָנוּ – הָנוּ). This also strengthens the link between חָקַר in v. 3 and the coinage-related nuance added by ἀνεξέλεγκτος. What v. 2 is saying about the king is that it is part of his prestige and glory to evaluate and establish prices for all sorts of things, or to administer τὰ πράγματα, which indicated the state as business, personal matter, and property of the sovereign¹⁹.

Finally, in Greek literature there are numerous occurrences of the adjective καθάρως used for coins and metals. An eloquent example is, for instance, Herodotus, *Historiae* 4.166²⁰:

[...] Δαρεῖος μὲν γὰρ χρυσίον καθαρώτατον ἀπεψήσας ἐς τὸ δυνατότατον νόμισμα ἐκόψατο, Ἀρυάνδης δὲ ἄρχων Αἰγύπτου ἀργύριον τῷτὸ τοῦτο ἐποίησε, καὶ νῦν ἐστὶ ἀργύριον καθαρώτατον τὸ Ἀρυανδικόν. [...]

"[...] for Darius had coined money out of gold refined to an extreme purity, and Aryandes, then ruling Egypt, made a like silver coinage; and now there is no silver money so pure as is the Aryandic".

¹⁸ Cf. Polybius, *Historiae* 2.62.7; Isaeus, *De Pyrrho* 35; Lev 27,8 (in this case used for people).

¹⁹ See also Prov 31,3, which precedes our passage in the LXX, where the translator adopts one of the meanings of הֵיחַל, i.e., "wealth" (πλοῦτος), rather than giving the word a sexual meaning, more likely because of the mention of women. Kings must look after their (and their kingdom's) wealth. The second part of the verse is highly modified.

²⁰ Herodotus, *The Persian Wars* 4.166 (LCL 117; Cambridge, MA 1920).

Further occurrences of this kind can be found in Theocritus, *Idyllus* 15.36-7 and Philo, *Legum allegoriarum liber I*, 77.

III. THE PTOLEMAIC BACKGROUND

If coins, and therefore economy, are so important in these verses, the question arises about what is so special about coinage in Ptolemaic Egypt ²¹. For one thing, King Ptolemy was the first among Alexander's successors who changed royal types in his minting, which is in keeping with his stronger separatist tendencies among the Diadochs. He introduced a new silver coinage in 319 BCE ²². Probably around 311 BCE, he changed the reverse type, replacing the image of the seated Zeus/Ba'al with one of Athena Alkidemos. Between 305 and 294 BCE he moved away from the Attic-weight standard, with the weight of his tetradrachms dropping from 17.25 g. to 14.20 g. Around 298/7 Ptolemy introduced a new kind of gold stater, with his own diademed portrait on the obverse and the image of Alexander riding a chariot drawn by four elephants. The legend reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ, "of King Ptolemy". Finally, Ptolemy introduced a new silver series in 294 BCE with his own portrait on the obverse and an eagle perched on a thunderbolt on the reverse. The other successors started striking their own coinage a few decades later: Lysimachus in 297/6, Demetrius Poliorcetes in the mid-290s, Seleucus I after 301.

What is remarkable in the economic policy of the Ptolemaic kingdom is that the Ptolemies decided to adopt a closed epichoric currency system across the country ²³. Most of the Hellenistic kingdoms, following Alexander's conquest, adopted an open system which allowed for any sort of coinage to be used inside the kingdom. Apart from the development in minting new types and series illustrated above, the Ptolemaic kingdom changed also other aspects. After Ptolemy's acclamation as king in 306/5, the tetradrachm dropped first to 15.70g. (305 BCE), and then to 14.27g. (294 BC). Ptolemy also introduced a new gold denomination, the so-called

²¹ I have chosen to follow mainly P. THONEMANN, *The Hellenistic World* (Cambridge 2015) for the following outline, as he efficiently summarizes how coinage and money were dealt with in Ptolemaic Egypt. Another important and valuable study is R. BOGAERT, "Les opérations des banques de l'Égypte ptolémaïque", *Ancient Society* 29 (1998-1999) 49-145.

²² See also C.C. LORBER, "A Revised Chronology for the Coinage of Ptolemy I", *The Numismatic Chronicle* 165 (2005) 45-64; EADEM, "The Coinage of the Ptolemies", *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage* (ed. W.E. METCALF) (Oxford 2012) 211-214.

²³ Cf. THONEMANN, *Hellenistic World*, 119-124.

τρίχρυσον, weighing around 17.80g., which was valued 60 silver drachms, thus implying a distinctive Egyptian gold-to-silver ratio 1:12, rather than the 1:10 ratio common in the Greek world. Peculiar to the Ptolemaic kingdom, they struck large quantities of fiduciary bronze coins — also very large in size — which circulated in rural Egypt. The epichoric system adopted by the Ptolemies implied that their currency could be used only in Egypt and in their possessions overseas, and that in these places they were the only legal tender. Foreign coins could be traded for Ptolemaic coins at an adverse exchange rate that enriched the kingdom. The Ptolemies adopted this closed system most likely because of the geographical nature of Egypt, which has no silver-mines of its own. The only way for the crown to keep a silver-based system was to prevent the coins from leaving Egypt. In effect, the Ptolemies were running Egypt as a huge Greek polis, with its own civic coinage.

We can therefore see why the translator thought that re-minting silver coins that were worn or that were no longer legal tender was a fundamental task for the king: the Ptolemies had their own currency, and re-minting both worn silver-coins and foreign silver-coins would have kept Egypt away from economic disaster. They could not afford to allow silver to leave the kingdom, and by minting silver-coins the Ptolemies were able to keep their throne firm.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the point of view of the relationship between the LXX and the Hebrew in Prov 25,4-5, we may conclude that the translator's choices are intentional and stem from a social background (Ptolemaic Egypt) in which coins and kingship were knitted together. The Hebrew text is composed of couplets, and v. 4 can be loosely associated by way of parallelism with the image of the king occurring in v. 5. The Hebrew text in v. 4 functions as a metaphor that can be applied to the royal court. The Greek translator preserves the royal character of v. 4 as well. Whereas the Hebrew image of smelting and casting metals is not the work of a king, striking coins falls within the authority of the crown and is an important royal activity, as the Ptolemaic context suggests.

SUMMARY

The article discusses the translation and meaning of LXX Prov 25,4-5. These verses seem to be often misunderstood in modern translations, which tend to convey the meaning contained in the Hebrew text rather than that of the Greek version. What I propose is that the Greek translation does not refer to metallurgy and the refining of silver, as in the Hebrew source. The translator changes the meaning of the proverb and substitutes the image of minting coins for smelting silver (correctly rendered in a minority of modern translations and studies). The new teaching of LXX Proverbs with regards to money perfectly fits the Ptolemaic social and economic context and constitutes a further element to understand the outlook on kingship and on the duties of the Lagid king in Hellenistic Alexandria.

CHRISTOLOGIE UND DIE *LECTIO CONTINUA* DES PSALTERS

Der Patrologe Hermann-Josef Sieben schreibt von der „Grundüberzeugung der Alten Kirche von der einzigartigen Bedeutung, die dem Psalter für den christlichen Glauben und die Kirche zukommt. So sind denn auch die Psalmen unter allen [!] Büchern der Heiligen Schrift das meist gebrauchte und das am höchsten verehrte“¹. Diese Hochschätzung des Psalters über alle anderen biblischen Bücher hinaus beginnt im Neuen Testament. Dieses zitiert kein Buch des Alten Testaments häufiger als den Psalter.

I. NEUTESTAMENTLICHE CHRISTOLOGIE UND PSALMENEXEGESE

In den synoptischen Evangelien wird die christologische Frage von Jesus als eine Frage der Psalmeninterpretation aufgeworfen:

Da fragte er sie: Wie kann man behaupten, der Messias sei der Sohn Davids? Denn David selbst sagt im Buch der Psalmen: Der Herr sprach zu meinem Herrn: Setze dich mir zur Rechten, und ich lege dir deine Feinde als Schemel unter die Füße. David nennt ihn also «Herr». Wie kann er dann Davids Sohn sein? (Lk 20,41-44 // Mt 22,41-45; Mk 12,35-37)

Die kurze Passage stellt drei Punkte klar: Für den lukanischen Jesus steht fest, dass 1. das „Buch der Psalmen“ *ein* Buch ist, dass es 2. vom Messias handelt und dass 3. der Sprecher des Psalmenbuchs David ist².

Wie muss man Psalm 110 verstehen, wenn David sagt: „So spricht Adonai zu meinem Herrn ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου“? David nennt den Messias κύριος wie Jhwh selbst, und indem er ihn „Herrn“ nennt, ordnet er, David, der Urahn des Messias, sich dem Messias unter. Der Messias ist Sohn Davids und doch weit mehr als das. Von diesem „weit mehr“

¹ H.J. SIEBEN, *Schlüssel zum Psalter* (Paderborn u. a. 2011) 9. Auch die ganze westkirchliche Christologie und Trinitätslehre ist wesentlich als Psalterauslegung entstanden. J. RATZINGER, *Dogma und Verkündigung* (München³1977) 203, schreibt: „Die Antwort auf die Frage: Wie kommt es zu dem Begriff persona? lautet: Der Ursprung liegt in der sogenannten prosopographischen Exegese“ – nämlich der Psalmen.

² „David sagt“ in Lk 20,42 könnte sich auf den ersten Blick nur auf die Überschrift von Psalm 110 („von David“) beziehen. Lukas zitiert aber mit „David sagt“ nicht nur Psalmen wie Psalm 110 (Lk 20,42), Psalm 16 (Apg 2,25) und Psalmen 69 und 109 (Apg 1,20), die mit „von David“ überschrieben sind, sondern auch andere wie Psalm 2 (Apg 4,25). Für den ganzen Psalter gilt: „David sagt“. Auch der Hebräer zitiert in 4,7 selbstverständlich Psalm 95 als Wort Davids.

handelt Psalm 110 nach dem lukanischen Jesus. Der Jesus der Evangelien findet sich selbst in den Psalmen.

Auf dem Weg nach Emmaus sagt der Auferstandene, der Psalter handle vom Messias. Leiden und Auferstehung des Christus sowie die darauf folgende Völkerbekehrung stünden „im Gesetz des Mose, in den Propheten und Psalmen“³. Wenn diese Formulierung aus Lk 24,44 mit der in 24,27 deckungsgleich ist, wo es heißt „ausgehend von Mose und allen Propheten ... in der gesamten Schrift“, dann sind die Psalmen keine dritte Schriftengruppe, sondern unter den Propheten, zu denen sie gerechnet werden⁴, eine in Sachen Christologie besonders hervorzuhebende — das meint jedenfalls der lukanische Jesus, der die Psalmen explizit nennt. Hätten die Emmausjünger Jesus gefragt, in welchen Psalmen genau das Schicksal des Messias im Sinne Jesu beschrieben sei, hätte er zwar auf Einzeltexte wie Psalm 22 oder Psalm 69 verweisen können. Genau das tut er aber nicht. Er sagt ganz generell: „in den ... Psalmen“⁵. Meint das nur einzelne Psalmen oder auch den ganzen Psalter, den Zusammenhang der Psalmen, das „Psalmenbuch“, wie Lk 20,42 es nennt?

Die Evangelisten benutzen auch einzelne Psalmen. Es ist bekannt, dass die Synoptiker die Passionserzählung nicht mit Zitaten aus Psalm 22 „belegen“, sondern umgekehrt, Psalm 22 als Drehbuch heranziehen, auf das sie nie explizit verweisen, das sie aber durch die Figuren der Passion aufführen lassen. Jesus selber ruft bei Matthäus und Markus „mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen?“ (Ps 22,2; Mt 27,46; Mk 15,34); der Volksmenge wird V. 8 des Psalms zugewiesen: „Und das Volk blieb stehen und schaute. Es verlachten aber auch die Anführer“ (Lk 23,35 = Ps 22,8). Mt 27,41-43 baut Ps 22,9 zu einer Aufführung aus: „Ebenso verhöhnten ihn auch die Hohepriester, die Schriftgelehrten und die Ältesten [...] Er vertraute auf Gott. Der entreiße ihn jetzt, wenn er ihn will!“. Alle Evangelisten weisen V. 19 den römischen Soldaten zu und lassen sie Lose über die Kleider werfen (Mk 15,24; Mt 27,35; Lk 23,34; Joh 19,24). Matthäus folgt dem Drehbuch des Psalms auch noch in der Ostererzählung, wenn er in Mt 28,10 den Aposteln, die Jesus bis dahin noch nie

³ M. ZERWICK, *Graecitas Biblica* (Roma 1966) §184: “[S]ubsumptio plurium sub uno articulo eorum aliquam unionem si non identitatem, indicat”.

⁴ Das NT nennt das, was wir AT nennen „Gesetz und Propheten“ (Mt 5,17; 7,12; Apg 24,14; Röm 3,12; so schon 2 Makk 15,9) oder — wie Lukas lieber sagt — „Mose und die Propheten“ (Lk 16,29.31; 24,27; Apg 26,22; 28,23). In Qumran gibt es Pescharim zu Prophetenbüchern und Psalmen.

⁵ F. BLASS – A. DEBRUNNER – F. REHKOPF, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen 171990) 226: „Bei mehreren durch καί verbundenen Substantiven kann der Artikel vom ersten auf das folgende (die folgenden) übertragen werden, besonders bei gleichem Genus und Numerus“.

seine „Brüder“ genannt hatte, nun von Jesus durch die Frauen etwas ausrichten lässt mit den Worten: „kündet meinen Brüdern“ ἀπαγγείλατε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου ⁶. Mt wird mit dem universalen Taufbefehl enden. Ps 22,23 eröffnet die Dankhälfte des Psalms mit „ich will deinen Namen meinen Brüdern verkünden“ und leitet über zu einer universalen Völkerbekehrung, die das Rettungshandeln Gottes an dem unschuldig Leidenden von Psalm 22 auslösen wird. Michael Theobald schreibt: „Bis in Struktur und Textgewebe hinein ist sie [die vorevangeliaire Passionserzählung] vom Psalter geprägt“ ⁷.

Bei Lukas liegt die Sache anders als bei Matthäus und Markus. Die meisten Untersuchungen zum Psalmengebrauch bei Lukas haben nur seine Benutzung von Einzelzitaten und Einzelsalmen betrachtet ⁸.

Anders die exzellente Untersuchung von Peter Doble „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“ ⁹. Doble schreibt über Lukas: „His overt references to this Book [of the Psalms] (Lk. 20:42; Acts 1:20), to ‘Psalms’ (Lk. 24:44) and to ‘psalm’ (Acts 13:33, 35) signal his unique use of psalms” ¹⁰. Bis Lukas 19 geht Lukas in seinem Psalmengebrauch Matthäus und Markus parallel. Nach Apostelgeschichte 17 zieht er sie gar nicht mehr heran (ebd. 85). Lukas arbeitet mit dem Psalmenbuch genau zwischen Lukas 20 und Apostelgeschichte 17, in dem Teil also, in dem das „programme“ (ebd. 88) von Lk 24,46-47 entwickelt wird: „So steht es geschrieben: Der Christus wird leiden und am dritten Tag von den Toten auferstehen und in seinem Namen wird man allen Völkern Umkehr verkünden, damit

⁶ Die Formulierung τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου findet sich in der ganzen Bibel nur in Tob 1,16; 2 Makk 7,38; Pss 22,23 (= Mt 28,10; Heb 2,12); 69,9. Die Synoptiker folgen in der Regel der Septuaginta, die in allen bekannten Handschriften διηγήσομαι τὸ ὄνομά σου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου schreibt. Allerdings zitiert auch Heb 2,12 den Psalm in exakt dem gleichen Wortlaut wie Mt, so dass man annehmen muss, der *auctor ad Hebraeos* und Matthäus haben entweder gleichlautende LXX-Handschriften vor sich gehabt oder den hebräischen Text selbst in gleicher Weise übersetzt.

⁷ M. THEOBALD, „Anfänge christlichen Gottesdienstes in neutestamentlicher Zeit“, in J. BÄRSCH – B. KRANEMANN (Hg.), *Geschichte der Liturgie in den Kirchen des Westens*, Bd. I (Münster 2018) 37-82, 50.

⁸ C.M. TUCKET (Hg.), *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (BETHL 131; Löwen 1997); T. HOLTZ, *Untersuchungen über die alttestamentlichen Zitate bei Lukas* (TU 104; Berlin 1968); D.L. BOCK, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*. Lucan Old Testament Christology (JSNT.S 12; Sheffield 1987); F. BOVON, *Luke the Theologian*. Thirty-three Years of Research (1950-1983) (Allison Park, PA 1987); C.A. KIMBALL, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel* (JSNT.S 94; Sheffield 1994). Selbst N. FÜGLISTER, „Alttestamentliche Grundlagen der neutestamentlichen Christologie“, in J. FEINER – M. LÖHRER (Hg.), *Mysterium Salutis* III/1 (Einsiedeln u. a. 1970) 105-225, verweist auf den S. 111-114 nur auf die „Königspsalmen“ – also Einzelgedichte.

⁹ P. DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, in S. MOYISE – M.J.J. MENKEN (Hg.), *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London 2004) 83-117.

¹⁰ DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 87.

ihre Sünden vergeben werden. Angefangen in Jerusalem, seid ihr Zeugen dafür“. Das Leiden des Messias, seine Auferweckung und die Sendung zu allen Völkern sind die „Programmpunkte“, für die Lukas sein Christusporträt malt nach dem Vorbild des Davidbilds der Psalmen ¹¹. Er parallelisiert Davids Biographie mit der Jesu ¹². Lukas zitiert explizit die Psalmen 91, 118, 110, 31, 69, 109, 16, 132, 2 (ebd. 83f., Reihenfolge der Zitation, MT-Zählung). Aus der Verbindung dieser Psalmen konstruiert Lukas sein Davidbild, das auf Christus hin durchsichtig sein soll ¹³. Dezidiert stellt Doble, ebd. 95, fest: „psalms-in-dialogue, not isolated proof texts [...] carried God's plans revealed in scripture“. Lukas bringt die ausgewählten Psalmen miteinander ins Gespräch ¹⁴. So erst entsteht das Davidbild, aus dem er sein Christusbild erzeugt. Dasselbe gilt von Pauli Rede in Pisidien (Apg 13,16-41), die mit Psalmen 2, 89 und 16 arbeitet ¹⁵.

At its heart, Luke's Passion Narrative has a brief, *distinctive* account of Jesus' death (Lk. 23:34b-49) with a high density of allusions to psalms of David's suffering. When a reader 'hears' each allusion as a signal to recall its context, the sequencing of these 'decompressed files' works intertextually with Luke's story of Jesus' death; *this sequence becomes the suffering one's voice from the cross. [...] This sequence is, consequently, scripture in which 'it is written' that the Christ should suffer* (Lk. 24:46, cf. v. 26) ¹⁶.

Luke 'textures' psalms one with another and with traditional material about Jesus; atomistic readings miss the character of his engagement with this 'christianized hymnbook'. [...] *In sum, Psalms are a precondition of, rather than additional to, Luke's narrative* ¹⁷.

Demnach arbeitet Lukas nicht mit isolierten Einzelpsalmen, sondern mit dem Psalmenzusammenhang, einem Zusammenhang freilich, den er selber zwischen ausgewählten Psalmen herstellt. Lukas meint die

¹¹ DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 89: „Luke's presentation of Jesus' biography compared with David's [...] distilled from 'his' psalms“.

¹² „[A] key [...] lies in his using psalms to build a comparative biography of David and Jesus; this is basic to grasping what Luke is about“ (DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 89).

¹³ „These 'signaled' psalms *together* contribute to David's biography“ (DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 90).

¹⁴ DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 95: „Of the six psalms discernible in Peter's speech, two (15, 17) belong to books traditionally recognized as David's (Pss 1–71). Two others (109, 138) are ascribed to David by their headings. One other (131) is a psalm focused sharply on David's person and on God's promise. The remaining psalm (117) is nowhere overtly ascribed to David, but is a core psalm in Luke-Acts and closely associated with Jesus' life, death and resurrection. These 'Lukan' psalms are about David's biography and covenant, a selection cohering with the narrative shape of Peter's speech, a comparative biography of David and Jesus“.

¹⁵ DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 111: „Luke has brought Psalms 2 and 88 [LXX] in active dialogue“.

¹⁶ DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 116. Hervorhebungen von Doble.

¹⁷ DOBLE, „The Psalms in Luke-Acts“, 117.

Psalmen als Buch, Psalmen im Zusammenhang, denn das „Programm“ Tod — Auferstehung — universale Sendung wird von kaum einem Einzelsalm geboten ¹⁸.

Lukas ordnet die Psalmen, die er in Dialog bringt, um sein David-Jesus-Bild zu zeichnen, selbst zusammen. Und doch entspricht er damit dem, was der Psalter selber bietet, höchst genau. Der Psalter selbst in seiner vorliegenden Psalmenanordnung malt das Bild eines leidenden, von Gott (wieder und wieder) geretteten David, der eben durch sein Leiden und seine Rettung die Völker zur universalen Anerkennung der Herrschaft Jhwhs bringt. Dies tut der Psalter dadurch, dass er

1. nach dem Portal der Psalmen 1–2 nicht etwa einfach Davids Biographie folgt, sondern in Psalm 3 betont am Ende von Davids Leben, mit dem leidenden und verfolgten David einsetzt, konkret mit dem Abschalom-aufstand, Davids letzter Krise,
2. nach dem Abschluss des Lebens Davids (Psalm 18 = 2 Samuel 22) im Zentrum von Buch I mit Psalm 22 eine Grundsatzreflexion über des Königs Leiden und Rettung beginnt, die in die universale Hinwendung der Völker zum Gott Israels mündet (Ps 22,28–32, fortgesetzt in den folgenden Psalmen, v. a. Psalm 24),
3. in *lectione continua* gelesen immer wieder die Sequenz Leiden – Erhöhung bietet. Dies soll unter Punkt 6 am Beispiel der Abfolge Psalmen 36–40 gezeigt werden.

II. DER PSALTER ALS MEDITATIONSTEXT

Hermann Gunkel vertrat gegen Mowinckel die Auffassung, dass nur ein kleinerer Teil der Psalmen einen kultischen Entstehungshintergrund habe. Für die meisten gelte das nicht, und erst recht sei das Buch des Psalters nicht als Gesangbuch für den Tempel zusammengestellt worden, sondern „in der Absicht, ein religiöses Volksbuch zu schaffen, das bestimmt war zur Erbauung und Andacht der Laien“ ¹⁹. Füglisters schloss aus der Tatsache, dass nicht nur im NT, sondern auch in Qumran der Psalter das bei weitem am häufigsten zitierte Buch ist, dass es, obwohl nicht gottesdienstlich verwendet, doch viel gebraucht wurde und außerordentlich beliebt und weithin bekannt war ²⁰. Der Psalter diene — worauf schon seine Eröffnung mit Psalm 1 weist — als Meditationsbuch, dass von

¹⁸ Psalm 22 kommt mit einer Darstellung von Leiden und universalem Ausblick in die Nähe, hat aber, wie viele andere Klagepsalmen höchstens ein Dankversprechen.

¹⁹ H. GUNKEL – J. BEGRICH, *Einleitung in die Psalmen* (Göttingen ²1966) 445.

²⁰ N. FÜGLISTER, „Die Verwendung und das Verständnis der Psalmen um die Zeitenwende“, in J. SCHREINER (Hg.), *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung* (FzB 60; Würzburg 1988) 319–384, 350f.

Anfang bis Ende rezitiert wurde ²¹. Nach Lohfink war „der Psalter ein *einzig*er Meditationstext“ ²², in dem der Rezitierende nicht zuletzt durch Stichwortverkettungen von Psalm zu Psalm weitergeleitet wurde. Diese Stichwortverkettungen zeigen, welchen Zweck die Endredaktion verfolgte: die meditierende Rezitation der Psalmen in der im Psalter vorliegenden Abfolge ²³. Die Psalmenkommentatoren Frank-Lothar Hossfeld und Erich Zenger haben ihren Kommentaren (NEB und HThKAT) diese Sicht zu Grunde gelegt ²⁴.

Dass der beliebte und viel gebrauchte Rezitationstext weithin auswendig gewusst wurde, wird man annehmen können, zumal im Altertum Traditionsweitergabe weit mehr als heute durch Auswendiglernen des traditionellen Stoffs erfolgte, nicht durch den Besitz teurer Bücher. In seinem vielbeachteten Buch „Writing on the Tablet of the Heart“ drückt David Carr es so aus: „[T]he focus was as much or more on the transmission of texts from mind to mind as on the transmission of texts in written form“ ²⁵. Daher heißt es auch im jüngeren Teil des Sprüchebuchs noch: „Mein Sohn, vergiss meine Unterweisung nicht, bewahre meine Gebote in deinem Herzen, [...] binde sie dir um den Hals, schreib sie auf die Tafel deines Herzens!“ (Spr 3,1.3). Und nach dem Hauptgebot „Höre, Israel“ (Dtn 6,4) heißt es seit jehor: „Diese Worte, auf die ich dich heute verpflichte, sollen auf deinem Herzen geschrieben stehen“ (Dtn 6,5).

III. PSALMEN- UND PSALTEREXEGESE

Bis ins 19. Jh. hinein lasen die Ausleger die Psalmen im Kontext des Psalters. Für Hengstenberg und Delitzsch war der Zusammenhang und die sinnvolle Abfolge der Psalmen eine selbstverständlich gemachte Voraussetzung. Indem die Gattungsforschung Gunkels und Mowinckels die Gedichte aus ihrem literarischen Zusammenhang herausnahm und sie in den literaturgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang der altorientalischen Literatur stellte mit dem Ziel, einen außertextlichen „Sitz im Leben“ zu rekonstruieren, wurde die Frage nach dem „Sitz in der Literatur“ der Bibel weitgehend vergessen. Gunkel fragt noch, ob die Psalmen im Psalter ein Anordnungsprinzip erkennen ließen, verneint die Frage aber, auch wenn

²¹ D. BÖHLER, *Psalmen 1-50* (HThKAT; Freiburg 2021) 36.

²² N. LOHFINK, „Psalmengebet und Psalterredaktion“, *ALW* 34 (1992) 1-22, 6.

²³ LOHFINK, „Psalmengebet“, 7.

²⁴ F.-L. HOSSFELD – E. ZENGER, *Die Psalmen I* (NEB; Würzburg 1993) 8.

²⁵ D.M. CARR, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart. Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford 2005) 5.

er Delitzsch etwa zugibt, dass „verschiedene Gesichtspunkte bei der Zusammenstellung einzelner Psalmen nachweisbar sind (Ähnlichkeiten bestimmter Gedanken, Übereinstimmung in besonderen Stichworten, ... Gleichheit der Überschriften)“²⁶. Die Frage nach dem Psalterzusammenhang spielt für längere Zeit keine Rolle mehr.

Claus Westermann nahm 1961/62 mit seinem Artikel „Zur Sammlung des Psalters“²⁷ die Frage wieder auf. Er sieht nicht nur kleinere Einzelsammlungen zusammengestellt, sondern auch eine ordnende Hand im Gesamtpsalter, so dass die ersten beiden Bücher, die erste und die zweite Davidsammlung, die Masse der Einzelklagen enthalten, der Gesamtpsalter aber von Klage zum Lob voranschreitet und an den Eckpunkten die beiden Königspsalmen 2 und 89 in hermeneutischer Absicht gesetzt wurden. In Deutschland ist diese Fragestellung v. a. von Norbert Lohfink sowie von Erich Zenger und Frank-Lothar Hossfeld in ihrem Psalmenkommentar weiterverfolgt worden.

Wilsons „Editing of the Hebrew Psalter“ von 1981 wurde für die weitere Diskussion entscheidend: Die Eröffnung des Psalters mit Psalm 1 weist den Psalter als Meditationsbuch aus, nicht als Liederbuch für den Kult²⁸. Die ersten beiden Bücher gehören ins Leben Davids und führen mit Psalm 72 und seinem Kolophon bis zu Salomo²⁹. Buch III handelt in den Psalmen 73–89 von der Zerstörung Jerusalems und des Tempels sowie dem Untergang der Monarchie. In der weiteren Diskussion wird man die durch die Eckpsalmen 2 und 89 begrenzten Bücher I–III oft „messianischen Psalter“ nennen. Psalm 89 erzählt vom Scheitern des Davidbundes. Wilson schreibt: „In my opinion, Psalms 90–106 function as the editorial ‘center’ of the final form of the Hebrew Psalter. As such this grouping stands as the ‘answer’ to the problem posed in Psalm 89“³⁰. Buch IV gibt demnach Antwort auf das Problem von Buch III. Was bleibt nach dem Zusammenbruch der Dynastie, dem Scheitern der Natanverheißung?

Psalm 90 wird in seiner Überschrift Mose zugeschrieben³¹. Bis dahin war Mose im Psalter nur einmal, in Ps 77,21, vorgekommen. In den 17 Psalmen von Buch IV (Psalmen 90–106) wird Mose sieben Mal genannt (Pss 90,1; 99,6; 103,7; 105,26; 106,16.23.32) danach nicht mehr. Der Psalter verweist also nach dem Scheitern des Experiments mit dem irdischen Königtum und der staatlichen Existenz auf Mose als die

²⁶ GUNKEL – BEGRICH, *Einleitung*, 436.

²⁷ C. WESTERMANN, „Zur Sammlung des Psalters“, *TheolViat* 8 (1961/62) 278–284.

²⁸ G.H. WILSON, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBL.DS 76; Chico, CA 1981) 206.

²⁹ WILSON, *Editing*, 208.

³⁰ WILSON, *Editing*, 215.

³¹ Zum Folgenden vgl. BÖHLER, *Psalmen*, 30f.

vordavidische und bleibende Grundlage ³². Das Königtum Davids in den Büchern I-II wird in den Büchern IV und V abgelöst vom Königtum Gottes. Psalmen 2 und 89 handeln vom irdischen Königtum und rahmen den sogenannten „messianischen Psalter“ ³³. Auch die Psalmen 18, 20–21, 45, 61 und 72 handeln vom irdischen Königtum, aber Psalmen 2, 72 und 89 sind die Eckpsalmen für den Gesamtkomplex ³⁴. Die Psalmen vom Königtum Jhwhs (Psalmen 93–100) lösen das Thema des irdischen Königs zunächst einmal in gewisser Weise ab. Bücher IV und V werden daher gern „theokratischer Psalter“ genannt. Das bedeutet aber nicht, dass die Frage des davidischen Königtums, die „messianische“ Frage in den Büchern IV-V einfach erledigt ist. In Buch IV sieht es zunächst ganz klar danach aus, als erledige Gottes Königtum die Frage nach dem davidischen Monarchen: Nach Psalm 89 wird „Königsein“ nur noch von Jhwh (Pss 93,1; 95,3 etc.) und ausländischen Herrschern ausgesagt (Pss 102,16.23; 110,5). Doch findet sich schon in Buch IV (Psalmen 101 und 103) neuerlich die Überschrift „von David“. Und in Buch V tritt „David“ nicht nur verstärkt auf (Psalmen 108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–145), sondern wird noch einmal explizit Thema (Psalm 132). In Psalm 101 beginnt David, sich „in das theokratische Konzept zu integrieren“ ³⁵, indem er den (nicht genannten) Regierungssitz Gottes rein erhält: David übt in Psalm 101, ein Richteramt aus, heißt aber nicht „König“ ³⁶, dient vielmehr dem Königtum Gottes und beginnt, das Bild einer davidischen Figur zu entwerfen, die anders „König“ ist und Gottes alleiniges Königtum gegenwärtig setzt als Vorbeter Israels (Psalm 103), der auch für sein Volk betet (Psalm 108), der erniedrigt (Psalm 109) und als priesterliche Figur wieder erhöht wird zur Rechten Gottes (Psalm 110) ³⁷. In Psalm 110 wird deutlich, dass David nicht mehr sich selber meint, sondern eine künftige Davidfigur gezeichnet hat („so spricht JHWH zu meinem Herrn“). Vor dem Schluss-Hallel (Psalmen 146–150) kommt David in Psalmen 138–145 abschließend zu Wort. „In der Form von Liederabfolgen wird wohl insgeheim eine Futurologie entworfen. Sie

³² WILSON, *Editing*, 215; R.G. KRATZ, „Die Tora Davids. Psalm 1 und die doxologische Fünfteilung des Psalters“, *ZThK* 93 (1996) 1–34, 21f.

³³ WESTERMANN, *Sammlung*, 284.

³⁴ M. LEUENBERGER, *Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter*. Untersuchungen zur Komposition und Redaktion der theokratischen Bücher IV-V im Psalter (TVZ; Zürich 2004) 44f.; K. KOCH, „Der Psalter und seine Redaktionsgeschichte“, in K. SEYBOLD – E. ZENGER (Hg.), *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*. FS für Walter Beyerlin (HBS 1; Freiburg u. a. 1994) 243–277, 261.

³⁵ E. BALLHORN, *Das Telos des Psalters*. Der Textzusammenhang des Vierten und Fünften Psalmenbuches (Pss 90–150) (BBB 138; Bonn 2004) 379.

³⁶ BALLHORN, *Telos*, 111.

³⁷ Vgl. BALLHORN, *Telos*, 157f.; N. LOHFINK, „Drei Arten, von Armut zu sprechen. Illustriert an Ps 109“, *ThPh* 72 (1997) 321–336, 336.

deutet den kommenden Umbruch, hinter der Zeit der Bitten und Klagen, an“ ³⁸. David besingt „das Eintreten des ewigen Königtums Jahwes“ ³⁹, nachdem dieser die Armen, d. h. das von den Völkern unterdrückte Israel, erlöst hat. Daraufhin bekehren sich nun die Herrscher der Nationen zum wahren Gott (Psalm 138). In Psalm 145 „bezeichnet der Beter Gott als ‚seinen König‘. Damit legt David seine Krone angesichts der Königsherrschaft Gottes nieder und geht in der Schar der Beter auf“ ⁴⁰ (vgl. Pss 145,1.11; 146,10).

Der Psalter hat in seiner Gesamtanordnung also durchaus eine geschichtsbegleitende Funktion — darin den Hinteren Propheten nicht unähnlich. Was die Samuelbücher als äußeren Hergang erzählen, begleitet der Psalter, wie Wilson sagt, als geistliches Seelenleben Davids ⁴¹.

1. Die erste „Erzählung“ in Buch I: Psalmen 3–21

Mit Psalm 1 knüpft der Psalter an die Tora an und macht sich damit selbst zu einem torabezogenen und mit seinen fünf Büchern auch toraförmigen Buch. Psalm 1 stellt uns den Gesalbten des Herrn als Idealkönig nach Deuteronomium 17 vor, dessen einzige Waffe das Gebet ist, der die Tora meditiert Tag und Nacht. Die jüdische Tradition sagt, David nehme mit **אשרי־האיש** das Ende der Tora, das Ende des Mosesegens auf: **אשריך ישראל** (Dtn 33,29). „David beginnt, womit Mosche geschlossen“ kommentiert Samson Raphael Hirsch mit Verweis auf ältere jüdische Traditionen ⁴².

אשרי־האיש — sofern mit dem **איש** König David gemeint ist, muss man „selig der Mann“ übersetzen. Sofern aber David als Sprecher des ganzen Psalters gedacht ist, begrüßt er am Eingang des Psalters mit **אשרי־האיש** jedweden Menschen, der in die Meditation eintreten will: „selig der Mensch“. Der Beter von Psalm 1 kämpft in Psalm 2 als irdischer König auf dem Zion, als Gesalbter Jhwhs für die Gottesherrschaft. Damit ist das Thema des Gesamtpsalters angegeben.

Nach dem überschriftenlosen „Portal“ Psalmen 1–2 — so schon Hieronymus ⁴³ — beginnt der Psalter interessanterweise, ausweislich der Überschriften, nicht etwa mit Davids Jugendzeit, als der Hirtenknabe die Leier

³⁸ N. LOHFINK, *Lobgesänge der Armen*. Studien zum Magnifikat, den Hodajot von Qumran und einigen späten Psalmen (SBS 143; Stuttgart 1990) 105.

³⁹ LOHFINK, *Lobgesänge*, 105.

⁴⁰ BALLHORN, *Telos*, 380. Bei Paulus wird das so heißen: „Wenn ihm dann alles unterworfen ist, wird auch er, der Sohn, sich dem unterwerfen, der ihm alles unterworfen hat, damit Gott alles in allem sein“ (1 Kor 15,28).

⁴¹ WILSON, *Editing*, 174.

⁴² HIRSCH, *Psalmen*, 1.

⁴³ HIERONYMUS, *Commentarioli in Psalmos* 1,1.

spielte (1 Sam 16,18-19). Der Psalter setzt in Psalm 3 ein mit Davids letztem Konflikt: „als er vor seinem Sohn Abschalom floh“. Die viel früheren Konflikte mit Saul bringt konzentriert erst Buch II⁴⁴. Der Psalter beginnt programmatisch mit Davids letztem Konflikt, dem Putsch Abschaloms. Der Psalter widmet sich also nicht so sehr Davids leuchtenden Siegen und Erfolgen, sondern seinen Konflikten und Leiden. Mit Millard, Hossfeld, Aurelius und Janowski glaube ich, dass sich die Überschrift zu Psalm 7 ebenfalls auf die Abschalomerzählung bezieht, näherhin auf 2 Samuel 18, die Überbringung der Todesnachricht durch den Kuschiter⁴⁵. „Wenn sich Ps 3,1 auf den Anfang des Aufstand Absaloms (2 Sam 15,13 – 17,23) bezieht, so Ps 7,1 auf dessen Ende, das mit der Nachricht vom Tod des Davidssohns besiegelt wird. [...] Dazu passt, wie Barbiero, Psalmenbuch, 83f betont, der Reinigungseid in Ps 7,4-6“⁴⁶. Der Titel שגִּיִן, der als singulärer kaum als Gattungsbezeichnung in Frage kommt⁴⁷, kommt von שגה (שגג) „irrtümlich einen Fehler begehen“⁴⁸ und bezieht sich auf das Unschuldsbekenntnis zu Beginn von Psalm 7. Die Übersetzung des Hieronymus von שגִּיִן לדוד *pro ignoratione David* und Luthers Wiedergabe mit „die Unschuld Davids“ trifft das Gemeinte m. E. immer noch am besten: David beteuert in Psalm 7 zunächst seine Unschuld an Abschaloms Tod (VV. 4-6) und betet dann, dass die Strafe über das Haupt des Mörders komme (VV. 13-17).

⁴⁴ Psalmen 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63; dazwischen sind Psalmen, die Davids Regierungszeit zugewiesen werden (Psalmen 51 und 60), davor schon Psalm 34 den Verfolgungen durch Saul. Psalm 18 (= 2 Samuel 22) bildet mit Psalm 3 (vgl. 2 Samuel 15) ein Kontinuum.

⁴⁵ MILLARD, *Komposition*, 132-134; HOSSFELD – ZENGER, *Psalmen I* (NEB), 75; E. AURELIUS, „Davids Unschuld. Die Hofgeschichte und Psalm 7“, in M. WITTE (Hg.), *Gott und Mensch im Dialog*. FS für Otto Kaiser (BZAW 345; Berlin – New York 2004) 391-412, 409; F. HARTENSTEIN – B. JANOWSKI, *Psalmen* (BK XIV/1.4; Göttingen 2019) 262. Die LXX liest Χουσι statt כוש. AURELIUS, „Unschuld“, 409: „Die Überschrift Ps 7,1 paßt [...] viel zu gut auf II Sam 18,32–19,1, um die Annahme zu erlauben, diese Beziehung sei nicht intendiert, sondern purer Zufall“.

⁴⁶ Janowski in HARTENSTEIN – JANOWSKI, *Psalmen*, 262.

⁴⁷ Hab 3,1 ist nur ähnlich: עַל שִׁגִּיִן.

⁴⁸ Die in letzter Zeit üblich gewordene Wiedergabe mit „Klagelied“ (EÜ; Lutherbibel) geht a priori davon aus, der Terminus müsse eine Liedgattung bezeichnen und stützt sich z. B. auf H.-J. KRAUS, *Psalmen I* (BK XV/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn⁶1989) 20: „hängt wohl mit dem akkadischen Begriff *šegû* = ‚Klagelied‘ zusammen“. Die Wörterbücher (Ges¹⁸ 1323; KB 2001, 1414) bleiben mit guten Gründen zögerlich. NRSV: „Shiggaion“, NKJ: „Meditation“, Buber: „umirrende Weise“ zeigen, wie unsicher diese Ableitung bleibt. Schon E.W. HENGSTENBERG, *Commentar über die Psalmen I* (Berlin²1849) 144f., meinte „So viel ist gewiß, daß man bei dem häufigen Vorkommen der Wurzel שגה im Hebr. durchaus nicht berechtigt ist, aus unsicherer Vergleichung der verwandten Dialecte eine Erklärung zu entnehmen. [...] Das שגה heißt immer irren“. Hieronymus sah das schon genauso („pro ignoratione“). Die LXX (ψαλμός) wusste den Ausdruck nicht zu deuten. Nach Raschi (zu Psalm 7) ist שגִּיִן ein Synonym von משגה („Irrtum“; vgl. Gen 43,12).

Millard bezieht auch die Überschrift zum Doppelpsalms 9–10 עלמות לבן mit einem Teil der jüdischen Tradition auf den Tod des Sohnes, also Abschalom⁴⁹. Millard nennt daher die Psalmen 3–10 einen Abschalom-Midrasch⁵⁰, der Davids Innenleben zu 2 Samuel 15–19 darstelle, von der Flucht Davids vor Abschalom bis zur Todesmeldung. Aber hier endet die Geschichte noch nicht! Psalm 3 setzt mit Davids letztem Konflikt ein, aber erst Psalm 18 schließt in seiner Überschrift sämtliche Konflikte Davids ab. Die Erzählung endet nicht vor Psalm 18. Psalm 18 ist überschrieben mit „Von David, dem Knecht des Herrn, der dem Herrn die Worte dieses Liedes sang an dem Tag, als ihn der Herr aus der Gewalt all seiner Feinde (!) und aus der Hand Sauls errettet hatte“. Davids Dankgebet am Ende des Abschalomkonflikts und aller Konflikte, ja am Ende seines leidgeprüften Lebens selbst, ist aus 2 Samuel 22 praktisch textgleich in den Psalter eingestellt worden. Verweist also Psalm 3 auf 2 Samuel 15, so Psalm 7 auf 2 Samuel 18, Psalmen 9–10 auf 2 Samuel 19, und Psalm 18 ist identisch mit 2 Samuel 22. Daher liegt die Annahme nahe, die Psalmen 11–18 setzen die Geschichte zwischen 2 Samuel 20 und 22 fort⁵¹.

Millard selbst hält Psalm 9 für das Danklied nach der Niederschlagung des Aufstands. Seltsamerweise folge ihm in der andern Hälfte Psalm 10 eine Klage. Der ungewöhnliche Umschlag von Dank zu Klage in dem akrostichischen Psalmen 9–10⁵² erklärt sich aber leicht durch den Umschlag vom Siegeslied nach der Niederschlagung des Aufstands zur Klage über Abschaloms Tod oder genauer über den feigen Mörder Joab. Über einen hinterhältigen Mörder klagt Ps 10,2–11, aber dann auch Psalm 11 in V. 2. Ich glaube, dass Millards Abschalom-Midrasch Psalmen 3–10 durch eine Joabklage in den Psalmen 11–14 fortgesetzt wird, bevor Psalm 15 zum Thema der Gottesnähe „im Zelt“ überleitet. Diese Gottesnähe „im Zelt“ wird dem Mörder Joab verweigert (1 Kön 2,28–34). Nichts hat David am Ende so sehr beschäftigt wie Joab. Auf dem Sterbebett bittet er Salomo als erstes, das Problem Joab zu lösen (1 Kön 2,5–6)⁵³. Die Gottesnähe

⁴⁹ In der Tat lesen viele Handschriften, inklusive derer der Kairoer Geniza, getrennt על מות; auch Raschi liest getrennt על מות, ebenso Hieronymus: „pro morte (filii)“.

⁵⁰ MILLARD, *Komposition*, 132–134.

⁵¹ E. BALLHORN, „Von David dem Knecht zum Volk der Gottesknechte im Psalter“, in U. BERGES – M. EBNER (Hg.), *Zur Theologie des Psalters und der Psalmen* (BBB 198; Göttingen 2019) 299, sieht in Psalm 18 durch „die Überschrift ein außergewöhnliches metatextliches Lesesignal gesetzt [...] Der Psalm wird dem ‚Knecht des Herrn‘ zugeschrieben. [...] Ps 18 ist einer der hermeneutisch wichtigsten Psalmen des Psalters. Durch seine Doppelüberlieferung in 2 Sam 22 und im Psalter stellt er das Verknüpfungselement par excellence zwischen beiden Textbereichen dar“.

⁵² In der LXX ist Psalmen 9–10 MT als ein einziger Psalm 9 überliefert.

⁵³ David nennt gegenüber Salomo in 2 Kön 2,5–6 Joab nur als Mörder Abners (2 Sam 3,27) und Amasas (2 Sam 20,10). David hätte nach 2 Sam 3,39 Joab schon gleich nach dem Mord

von Psalm 15 ist dem auf den Tod zugehenden David dagegen sicher. Psalm 16 ist Davids Grabinschrift (מכתם, LXX: στήλογραφία „Säuleninschrift“, Tg: גליפא = „Inschrift“), Psalm 17 aber ist eine Art Reinigungseid, eine negative Lebensbeichte, bevor dann eben Psalm 18 (= 2 Samuel 22) als Danklied Davids konfliktreiches Leben beschließt. Psalm 19 ist jene Torameditation, die zeigt, wie der David von Psalm 18 seine Kämpfe bestehen konnte: durch Gebet, durch permanente Torameditation (Ps 18,21-27 // Ps 19,8-10)⁵⁴. Die Psalmen 20 und 21 sind Davids Gebet für den Kronprinzen.

Der Abschalom-Midrasch reicht also m. E. von Psalm 3 bis Psalm 21⁵⁵. Der Psalter beginnt demnach mit Davids letztem Konflikt, mit dem Abschalom-Aufstand. Chronologisch ist dies das Ende von Davids Leben. Warum setzt der Psalter mit dem Ende ein? Vermutlich geht es um die Sache: den leidenden König. Dieses Thema, das Leiden des Königs und Israels und dessen Bedeutung für die Offenbarung Gottes vor der Menschheit, das ist das Thema, das die folgende Psalmengruppe aufnimmt.

Samson Raphael Hirsch schreibt in seinem Psalmenkommentar zu Psalm 18: „Als seine grosse Lebensaufgabe, die Frucht seines prüfungsvollen Lebens, hatte ... [in Psalm 18] David die Verbreitung der Gotteserkenntnis und Gotteshuldigung durch seine Gesänge ausgesprochen“⁵⁶. Nach Hirsch sah der David des Psalters darin seinen universalen Menschheitsdienst. Das Thema der weltweiten Anerkennung des Gottes Israels zieht sich durch den Psalter und wird am Ende immer stärker: „Lobt den Herrn alle Völker, preist ihn alle Nationen“ (Psalm 117).

2. Die zweite „Erzählung“ in Buch I: Psalmen 22–31

Psalm 22 steht „genau in der Mitte des ersten Psalmenbuches“ und besteht „aus drei gattungsmäßig verschiedenen Teilen ...: einem Klagelied (VV. 2-22), einem Danklied (VV. 23-27) und einem Hymnus (VV. 28-32)“⁵⁷.

an Abner als Heerführer absetzen wollen, war dazu aber damals noch nicht mächtig genug. Unmittelbar nach Abschaloms Ermordung setzt er Joab ab und Amasa ein (2 Sam 19,14). Damit macht der Erzähler indirekt klar, dass David sehr wohl wusste, wer Abschalom auf dem Gewissen hatte, aber explizit sagt der Erzähler das nie. Joab lässt sich die Entmachtung nicht gefallen und beseitigt sofort auch seinen Rivalen Amasa (2 Sam 20,8-12). David kann bis zu seinem Tod nichts gegen Joab unternehmen und übergibt die Sache, die ihm wichtiger ist als alles, an Salomo.

⁵⁴ Vgl. D. BÖHLER, „Der bestimmte Himmel über mir und das moralische Gesetz in mir? Was betrachtet der Sänger von Ps 19?“, *BZ* 53 (2009) 82-93, 91.

⁵⁵ BÖHLER, *Psalmen*, 42f.

⁵⁶ HIRSCH, *Psalmen*, 106.

⁵⁷ J. SCHREINER, „Zur Stellung von Psalm 22 im Psalter. Folgen für die Auslegung“, in J. SCHREINER (Hg.), *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung*. Psalm 2 und 22 (FzB 60; Würzburg 1988) 241-277, 270-271.

Völlig abrupt wird das Rufen des Beters in Ps 22,22 erhört: „Du hast mir Antwort gegeben (עֲנִיתָ)“. „[S]o steht also in der Mitte des ersten Psalmenbuchs ein Lied, das eine erhörte Klage darstellt“⁵⁸. Mit Psalm 22 setzt eine Grundsatzreflexion über das Leiden des Davids ein⁵⁹. Des Beters Rettung durch Gott führt schließlich zur Hinkehr der Völker zum Gott Israels im letzten Teil von Psalm 22. Im Leiden des Königs spiegelt sich das Leiden seines Volkes. Israels Leiden und seine im Lauf der Geschichte immer wieder erfolgende Errettung daraus sind eine Offenbarung vor den Nationen der Menschheit: Hier in Israel ist der wahre Gott (vgl. Ps 48,15)! Mit dem Ende von Psalm 22 beginnt also das Thema der Bekehrung der Völker zum Gott Israels. Psalm 23 kann bereits als Bekenntnis eines Bekehrten aus den Völkern gelesen werden: „Jhwh — und kein anderer! — ist mein Hirt“⁶⁰. Psalm 24 ist ausdrücklich eine sogenannte „Torliturgie“ oder „Einzugstora“ für Heiden. Anders als der verwandte Psalm 15, der für Israeliten gilt, beginnt Psalm 24 mit einem Blick auf die universale Menschheit: „Dem Herrn gehört die Erde und was sie erfüllt, der Erdkreis und seine Bewohner“ (24,1). Psalm 15 legt den die Nähe Gottes suchenden Israeliten in V. 5 auf das israelspezifische Zinsverbot der Tora fest (Ex 22,24). Psalm 24 dagegen verlangt vom Goj, dass er „seine Seele“⁶¹ nicht an Nichtiges hängt. „שׂוֹא“ meint hier wie in Jer 18,15, Jon 2,9 und Ps 31,7 nichtige Götzen⁶². Schließlich muss der den wahren Gott suchende Goj in Ps 24,6 das „Angesicht Jakobs“ suchen⁶³. Er muss von Israel die Kenntnis über den wahren Gott und seine Verehrung erfragen.

Wenn darauf Psalm 25 einsetzt mit den Worten „zu dir, Jhwh, will ich erheben meine Seele“ (אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה נַפְשִׁי אֲשָׂא; πρὸς σέ, κύριε, ἤρα τὴν ψυχὴν μου), dann knüpft das Ich hier direkt an die Abschwörung gegenüber den falschen Göttern in Ps 24,4 an (לֹא-נִשְׂא לִשְׂוֹא נַפְשִׁי; LXX: οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἐπὶ ματαίῳ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ⁶⁴) und weht sich und sein Leben dem Gott Israels⁶⁵. Die Psalmen 26–30 entfalten nun in auffälliger Weise das Tempelthema, das Psalm 24 schon angeschnitten hatte: „Wer darf

⁵⁸ SCHREINER, „Stellung“, 271.

⁵⁹ BÖHLER, *Psalmen*, 43f.

⁶⁰ LOHFINK, „Bund“, 63–64.

⁶¹ So EÜ mit LXX: τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, Tg: נַפְשִׁי, Hieronymus iuxta Hebr.: *animam suam*.

⁶² E. ZENGER, *Dein Angesicht suche ich*. Neue Psalmenauslegungen (Freiburg u. a. 1998) 595.

⁶³ MT ist mit מִבְּקֶשֶׁי פָּנֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב gegenüber LXX ζητούντων τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακώβ textkritisch vorzuziehen, da die LXX im Parallelismus offensichtlich assimiliert. Hieronymus liest *quaerentium faciem tuam Jacob*.

⁶⁴ Die LXX, die Lukas benutzt, liest „seine Seele“; ebenso Tg und viele hebr. Handschriften (z. B. aus der Kairoer Geniza). Der Leningradensis liest „meine“.

⁶⁵ LOHFINK, „Bund“, 59.

stehen an seiner heiligen Stätte“? Ps 26,6 spricht vom Umschreiten des Altars, wie es nur ein Priester könnte. Ps 27,4 wünscht das Wohnen im Hause des Herrn — auch das ist in Israel nur Leviten möglich ⁶⁶, Ps 28,2 spricht gar — singular im Psalter! — vom *d^ehîr*, dem Allerheiligsten, Psalm 29 spricht vom himmlischen Hekal, während die Gewitter-Epiphanie um Jerusalem, das irdische Heiligtum, kreist. Der Konvertit aus den Völkern verfolgt in den Psalmen 26–29 eine priesterliche Spiritualität des „Näher, mein Gott, zu dir!“ Psalm 30 schließlich ist überschrieben „Ein Lied zur Tempelchanukka von David“. Die Überschrift von Psalm 30 passt perfekt zum Tempelthema der vorangehenden Psalmen 24–29. Zu Psalm 30 selber passt sie gar nicht. Er handelt in keiner Weise von einer Einweihungsfeier und eignet sich überhaupt nicht für eine historische Tempelweihe. Die jüdische Tradition deutet daher „Tempelweihe“ hier symbolisch ⁶⁷. „Chanukka“ kann hier nur ein innerer spiritueller Prozess des Beters sein, wie all seine Levitensehnsüchte in den Psalmen 26–28. Psalm 31 repetiert die Meditation von Psalm 30: Nicht die hellen und siegreichen Zeiten nur, auch die dunklen und krisenhaften, alle „meine Zeiten sind in deiner Hand“ (Ps 31,16). Millard nimmt solche „weisheitlichen Reflexionen“ am Ende jeder Kompositionsgruppe im Psalter an ⁶⁸.

3. Die dritte „Erzählung“ von Buch I: Psalmen 32–41

Mit dem doppelten אָשֶׁר von Ps 32,1.2, das sofort in Ps 33,12 und Ps 34,9 fortgesetzt wird, beginnt eine neue Kompositionsgruppe, die mit dem אָשֶׁר in Ps 40,5 und Ps 41,2 schließt ⁶⁹. Hier endet auch das erste Psalmenbuch. Diese אָשֶׁר-Gruppe beginnt wie der Psalter selbst in Psalm 1. Sie enthält sechs Seligpreisungen. Mit dem Verbum וְאֵשֶׁר „er wird seliggepriesen werden“ in Ps 41,3 sind das sieben. Die Gruppe beginnt in Psalm 32 mit einer Meditation über das Glück der Sündenvergebung, die aber darauf hinausläuft, vor der Sünde zu warnen, weil sie unerträglich ist.

Ich unterweise dich und zeige dir den Weg, den du gehen sollst. Ich will dir raten; über dir wacht mein Auge». Werdet nicht wie Ross und Maultier, die

⁶⁶ Nach Lev 8,33-35 und Lk 1,23 haben Priester temporär am Heiligtum zu wohnen, nach Lev 21,12 soll der Hohepriester das Heiligtum auch nicht, wenn er einen Todesfall in der Familie hat, verlassen — gemeint ist hier der Dienst, denn eingesperrt ist er nicht (vgl. Th. HIEKE, *Leviticus II* (HThKAT; Freiburg u. a. 2014) 831f.

⁶⁷ Die jüdische Tradition deutet das Ich des Psalms daher auf das Kollektiv Israels, dessen Wiederherstellung der Psalm besinge. Die „Chanukka“ der Überschrift stünde für die Wiederherstellung Israels.

⁶⁸ MILLARD, *Komposition*, 72, 88f.

⁶⁹ BÖHLER, *Psalmen*, 44f., auch MILLARD, *Komposition*, 138, sieht in Psalmen 32–41 die abschließende Komposition in Buch I.

ohne Verstand sind. Mit Zaum und Zügel muss man ihr Ungestüm bändigen, sonst bleiben sie nicht in deiner Nähe. Der Frevler leidet viele Schmerzen. (Ps 32,8-10)

Psalm 33 knüpft an das Auge Gottes in Ps 32,8 an, genauer an Gottes Mund und Auge. Durch sein Wort hat Gott die Welt geschaffen (V. 6) und durch seinen Blick wird sie richtig gelenkt (V. 18). David meditiert hier über Genesis 1, das zehnfache „Gott sprach“ und das siebenfache „und er sah“. In Psalm 34 bezeugt er, dass in der wohlgeordneten Welt von Psalm 33 auf die Hilfe Gottes durch Wort und Blick Verlass ist ⁷⁰. In der ersten Psalmhälfte berichtet der Beter von einer entsprechenden Erfahrung, in der zweiten belehrt er wie ein Weisheitslehrer die Jugend in diesem Sinne. Psalm 34 ist ein Akrostichon, das auf Aleph beginnt und auf Pe endet. Der Zentralvers lautet auf Lamed. Das beschreibt nicht nur den Buchstaben ALePh, sondern aramäisch אֱלֵף. Das heißt im Qal „lernen“ im Pael „lehren“. Wie das genauso gebaute Akrostichon Psalm 25 einen Konvertiten im Glauben Israels alphabetisierte, so Psalm 34 die Jugend. In Psalm 35 wird dieser Glaube, in Gottes wohlgeordneter Welt könne einer, der sich an Gott hält, ohne Versündigung leben, auf eine harte Probe gestellt, denn die Feinde des Beters benutzen Mund und Auge nicht, um dem göttlichen Wort und seinem Blick zu antworten, sondern für Mobbing mit Mund und Auge (Ps 35,16-21). Dabei hatte die ganze Psalmengruppe 33–35 klargestellt, wofür der Menschenmund da ist: für das Lob Gottes. Psalmen 33 und 34 beginnen (33,1; 34,2), Psalm 35 endet auf תהלה (82,53) ⁷¹.

Die Psalmengruppe 36–40 soll nun eingehender in *lectione continua* betrachtet werden. Psalm 36 ist überschrieben „von David, dem Knecht des Herrn“ und weist so auf die Überschrift von Psalm 18, mit der allein Psalm 36 den Knechtstitel teilt. Psalm 36 setzt die „Erzählung“ der Psalmen 33–35 fort, blickt jetzt aber noch einmal besonders auf David ⁷².

Die Sünde, die in Gottes guter Welt nach Psalmen 33 und 34 eigentlich keinen Platz hat, ist nach Psalm 35 eine sehr bedrängende Realität unter den Menschen, v. a. in der Form von Anfeindungen in Wort und Blick, in Form von Mobbing ⁷³.

⁷⁰ Ps 34,2.5.6.16.

⁷¹ Vgl. E. RODRIGUES, *Psalm of Praise for the Rescue of the Throat. Concatenation and Lectio Continua of Pss 33–34–35* (Diss. Frankfurt 2020, im Druck).

⁷² Zu den Psalmen 36 und 37 folge ich im Wesentlichen den Anregungen von Norbert Lohfink: N. LOHFINK, „Innenschau und Kosmosmystik. Zu Psalm 36“, in DERS., *Im Schatten deiner Flügel* (Freiburg u. a. 1999) 172–187; N. LOHFINK, „Die Besänftigung des Messias. Gedanken zu Psalm 37“, in J. HAINZ – H.-W. JÜNGLING – R. SEBOTT (Hg.), *Den Armen eine frohe Botschaft. FS für Franz Kamphaus* (Frankfurt 1997) 75–87.

⁷³ BÖHLER, *Psalmen*, 642.

In Psalm 36 gerät David selbst in die schwere Versuchung, in so einer Welt es den Schlechten gleichzutun. „נאם-פֿשע לרשע בקרב לבי“ „Spruch der Abtrünnigkeit zum Frevler — inmitten meines Herzens!“⁷⁴, sagt David. Dort, wo er נאם-יְהוָה zu vernehmen hoffte⁷⁵, hört er נאם-פֿשע לרשע, den Spruch der Abtrünnigkeit zum Frevler. Der Beter ist über die Feststellung in seinem eigenen Innern entsetzt. Er betrachtet sodann so einen Frevler, der dem bösen Zuspruch aus dem eigenen Herzen folgt: Dieser ist völlig selbstverliebt, in sich verschlossen (VV. 2-5). Ganz anders dagegen die Weite Gottes und seiner Welt (VV. 6-10), durch deren Betrachtung David dem Spruch der Sünde widersteht.

„Lass mich nicht kommen unter den Fuß der Stolzen; die Hand der Frevler soll mich nicht vertreiben“ betet David in V. 12 und kehrt in die Ichform zurück wie am Anfang. Der Psalm hatte mit „dem Strom deiner Wonnen / von Eden“ in V. 9 (נחל עדניך) an das Paradies erinnert und führt mit „vertreiben“ נוד Hifil in V. 12 die Torameditation fort⁷⁶: So war Kain in Gen 4,12.14.16 vertrieben worden ins „Land Nod, östlich von Eden“. David will so einem Sünder nicht ähnlich werden und auf die Versucherstimme im eigenen Herzen nicht hören. Aber versucht worden ist er wie alle Menschen (vgl. Hebr 4,15).

Der sich unmittelbar anschließende Psalm 37 ist mit Psalm 36 vielfach verflochten. Thematisierte das ganz auf Gott blickende Gebet Psalm 36 die Versuchung zur Sünde im Innern Davids, so ist Psalm 37 ein Lehrtext an einen Menschen zum Umgang mit der um ihn herum geschehenden Sünde. Der Erfolg der Verbrecher um ihn herum lässt in ihm die Versuchung zum gewaltbereiten Zorn hochkommen. Statt der erschreckenden Stimme des Verbrechens (Ps 36,2) erklingt in Psalm 37 die eines Lehrers. Der Psalm zerfällt grundlegend in drei Hauptteile: VV. 1-11 sind Anreden des Lehrers an den Schüler, der Mittelteil VV. 12-26 ist ohne Anrede, im dritten Teil VV. 27-40 setzen die Anreden wieder ein. Anredeteil I besteht aus 15 Appellen, zunächst zwei Vetitiven mit sieben Imperativen in VV. 1-6, dann folgen in den beiden VV. 7-8 noch je zweimal zwei Imperative mit je einem Vetitiv. David bedrängt hier jemanden mit großem Nachdruck: Erhitz dich nicht gegen die Bösen, sonst wirst du ihnen noch gleich! Ein

⁷⁴ Die LXX liest hier, anders als der MT: φησὶν ὁ παράνομος τοῦ ἀμαρτάνειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. Wenn Lukas diesen Text gelesen hat, sieht er nicht in Ps 35[36],2 eine Versuchung Davids, sondern wehrt nur in V. 12 den „Fuß des Hochmuts“ von sich ab.

⁷⁵ נאם kommt über 350 Mal im AT vor, dabei fast immer in der Fügung נאם-יְהוָה oder נאם-אֱדֹנֵי יְהוָה, nur wenige Male mit einem anderen Akteur (Bileam in Num 24,3.4.15.16; David in 2 Sam 23,1; Agur in Spr 30,1; Falschpropheten in Jer 23,31).

⁷⁶ Für einen Leser der LXX ist in V. 9 (τὸν χειμάρρουν τῆς τρυφῆς σου) keine Anspielung auf den Garten Eden und in V. 12 (τρέμων [...] ἐν γῇ Ναὶδ) keine auf Kains Vertreibung erkennbar.

massiver Appell zur Gewaltlosigkeit angesichts der Übermacht des Frevlers. Zu wem redet David? Nicht zu einem von der Unterdrückung betroffenen Armen, sondern zu einem, der nach V. 4 das königliche Heischerecht hat, wie es die Psalmen 20–21 ausdrückten oder 1 Kön 3,5. Der Angesprochene wird nach V. 3 ein Hirt sein und nach V. 6 für die Gerechtigkeit zuständig. David spricht zum künftigen König. Deshalb nannte Lohfink seinen Aufsatz „Die Besänftigung des Messias“. David mahnt den Sohn Davids angesichts herrschender Gewalt, selber gewaltlos zu bleiben, um nicht den Frevlern gleich zu werden. Der akrostichische Psalm hat weisheitliche Züge, ist aber kein Weisheitspsalm. Schon Kraus widersprach ²1961 (291f.) einer zeitenthobenen weisheitlichen Deutung von Psalm 37 trotz des weisheitlichen Stils: „Im Zentrum des Psalm 37 liegt nicht ‚die Gerechtigkeit‘ oder ‚die Vergeltung‘ [gegen Gunkel], sondern das Zeugnis vom lebendigen Eingreifen Jahwes in das Leben der Menschen. Das ist ein wesentlicher Unterschied. ... Der Trost des alttestamentlichen Psalms lautet: Jahwe wird bald eingreifen“.

Auf dieser Linie stellte Norbert Lohfink 1997 in seinem Aufsatz die Einordnung des Psalms bei den Weisheitstexten grundlegend in Frage. Auslöser war die älteste uns bekannte Interpretation von Psalm 37 im qumranischen Psalmenpescher (4QpPs^a), die selbst nicht weit von der Entstehungszeit des Psalms entfernt, „ihn als apokalyptische Zukunftsschau gelesen [hat], nicht als Weisheitstext“ ⁷⁷. Wenn man näher hinsieht, stellt man fest, dass die drängenden Imperative und Vetitive des Anfangs, die „apokalyptische Naherwartung“ in V. 10 („nur noch ein wenig“) und das fünffach unterstrichene Thema der Inbesitznahme des Landes aus dem Psalm etwas völlig anderes machen als eine immer wahre Weisheitslehre im Präsens. Auch Oeming erkennt in Psalm 37 „eine akute Naherwartung“ ⁷⁸ und „apokalyptische Farben“ ⁷⁹. „Der Psalm unterscheidet sich in diesem Punkt eben doch von der allgemeinen Spruchweisheit“ ⁸⁰. Es ist kein Zufall, dass Jesu Seligpreisungen in Mt 5,5 diesen Psalm, V. 11, zitieren. Der Sohn Davids soll in seiner Amtsausübung selber strikt gewaltlos bleiben und fest darauf vertrauen, dass Gott selber sich des Problems annimmt. Und zwar führt Gott in allernächster Zukunft eine Wende herbei.

Psalm 38 knüpft nun an das Stillhaltegebot in Psalm 37 an. Ein thematischer Zusammenhang der Psalmen 37–39 entsteht dadurch, dass der in Psalm 37 Angeredete aufgefordert wird, „stillzuhalten und zu harren“

⁷⁷ LOHFINK, „Besänftigung“, 77.

⁷⁸ M. OEMING, *Das Buch des Palmen* I (NSKAT 13/1; Stuttgart 2000) 207.

⁷⁹ OEMING, *Psalmen*, 208.

⁸⁰ OEMING, *Psalmen*, 210.

(והתחולל) [...] דום; Ps 37,7) ⁸¹, dass daraufhin der Beter in Ps 38,14 „wie ein Stummer“ wird, „der den Mund nicht auf tut“ (כאלם לא יפתח־פי) ⁸², in Ps 39,3 „verstummt in Stille“ (נאלמתי דומיה) und „harrender Hoffnung“ (תוחלתי; 39,8) ⁸³ und schließlich kapitulierend „verstummt“ und „den Mund nicht mehr auf tut“ (נאלמתי לא אפתח־פי; 39,10) ⁸⁴.

Ps 37,27 empfahl, Böses zu meiden und Gutes zu tun; der Beter von Psalm 38 tat Gutes und erntete Böses (38,21). Ps 37,5 hatte versprochen „Wälz auf den Herrn deinen Weg und vertrau auf ihn, denn er wird handeln (והוא יעשה)!“ David hält sich an seinen eigenen Ratschlag und stellt in Ps 39,10 resigniert fest: „Ich verstummte. Ich werde meinen Mund nicht mehr auf tun, denn du hast gehandelt!“ (נאלמתי לא אפתח־פי כי אתה) (עשית) ⁸⁵.

In Psalm 38 klagt David über seinen körperlichen Verfall, vor allem aber über die Anfeindungen seiner Gegner, die seine Schwäche ausnutzen, um ihn gänzlich zu erledigen. Gleichzeitig beklagt er, dass seine eigenen Angehörigen und Freunde auf Distanz zu ihm gehen.

Lukas deutet in seiner Passionserzählung Jesu Schicksal mit einer Aufnahme von Ps 38,12 („meine Nächsten blieben in der Ferne stehen“) ⁸⁶, wenn er in Lk 23,49 schreibt: „Es standen aber alle mit ihm Bekannten von ferne“ ⁸⁷.

David hält sich im Psalm 38 im Umgang mit dem ihn treffenden Bösen an das, was er in Psalm 37 dem Sohn Davids geraten hatte. Und es ist ihm übel bekommen. Gott hat nicht eingegriffen, wie Psalm 37 es versprochen hatte. In Psalm 39 wird David kapitulieren, denn Gott hat ihn im Stich gelassen.

David entschließt sich zu Beginn von Psalm 39 angesichts der Frevler zu dem Schweigen, zu dem er selbst in Psalm 37 geraten hatte. Aber bald hält er es nicht mehr aus und aus ihm heraus bricht in Ps 39,2-7 eine Daseinsklage, die stark an Ijob erinnert.

David klagt darüber, dass das Menschenleben eine sinnlose Nichtigkeit ist, von Anfang an gescheitert. Die Klage ist sarkastisch und resigniert ⁸⁸,

⁸¹ LXX: ὑποτάγηθι [...] καὶ ἰκέτευσον (Ps 36[37],7).

⁸² LXX: ὥσει ἄλαλος οὐκ ἀνοίγων τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ (Ps 37[38],14).

⁸³ LXX: ἐκωφώθην καὶ ἐταπεινώθην (Ps 38[39],3); ἡ ὑπόστασίς μου (Ps 38[39],8).

⁸⁴ LXX: ἐκωφώθην καὶ οὐκ ἤνοιξα τὸ στόμα μου (Ps 38[39],10). Dass Ps 38[39],10 sowohl 37[38],14 als auch 38[39],8 aufnimmt, ist auch in der LXX gut zu sehen.

⁸⁵ Die LXX verstärkt in Ps 38[39],10 mit ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ποιήσας με die im Psalm vorhandenen Bezüge zu Genesis 1 mindert aber damit den Bezug zu Ps 36[37],5: καὶ αὐτὸς ποιήσει.

⁸⁶ LXX: καὶ οἱ ἐγγιστά μου ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔστησαν.

⁸⁷ Εἰστήκεισαν δὲ πάντες οἱ γνωστοὶ αὐτῷ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν.

⁸⁸ Es ist bekannt, dass Negativaussagen in einem Text, der auf den Messias angewandt wird, von den Rabbinen ebenso wie von den Kirchenvätern auf Israel/die Kirche ausgelegt

aber selbst sie ist noch eine Torameditation. Auch hier spricht noch der David von Psalmen 1 und 19. Der Beter steigert seinen resignierten Sarkasmus mit dem Wortspiel: „vergängliche Dauer“ (*hādel* in V. 5 und *hælæd* in V. 6). Er wird es in V. 6b mit dem Oxymoron „Windhauch — standhaft“ gleich unterstreichen: „Nur ganz Windhauch ist jeder Mensch, wie er da steht“. Der flüchtige Dunst als Ausdruck für die „Stabilität“ des Menschen ist nicht das einzige spöttische Wortspiel, mit dem David die Menschenexistenz resigniert, ja höhnisch beschreibt. Für hebräische Ohren ist **הבל** nicht nur „Windhauch“ (wie in Kohelet), sondern auch „Abel“ wie in Genesis 4. Und **אדם** ist nicht nur „Mensch“, sondern „Adam“: „Jeder Adam ist Abel“⁸⁹ oder: „Nur ganz Abel ist jeder Adam“ **כל-הבל כל-אדם** (V. 6, vgl. V. 12), ganz todgeweiht ist jeder Mensch — und zwar nach kürzester Frist, verbrecherisch abgebrochen, wie Abel. Bei wem David Kains Rolle sieht, sagt er nicht, wird in V. 12 aber ein brutales Bild für Gott gebrauchen: Gott ist eine von innen verzehrende „Motte“. Die Kombination von **הבל** „Windhauch“ und **אדם** „Mensch“, wie sie in Ps 39,6.12 vorliegt, findet sich außer in Kohelet nur noch in Gen 4,1f.25 und Pss 62,10; 94,11; 144,4. Der ironische Spott über Gottes Werk geht in V. 7 weiter: „Ja, als Bild geht einher ein Mann“. **בצלם** „als Abbild“ hat Gott den Menschen in Gen 1,27 geschaffen, aber das vielgepriesene „Abbild“ ist ein Traumbild, ein Trugbild! Der Ausdruck **בצלם** findet sich nur Gen 1,27; 9,6 und hier in Ps 39,7. David spielt nach „Adam“ (Genesis 2–5) und „Abel“ (Genesis 4) auch auf das „Gottesbild“ in Genesis 1 an⁹⁰. Mit einem letzten Imperativ, dem siebten in Ps 39,8–14, schließt David den Psalm: „Blick weg von mir!“ Der Form nach ist **השע** ein Hifil von **שעע** „verkleben“ und wäre dann eine grobe Aufforderung „verkleb (deine Augen) weg von mir!“ Aber das Verbum **שעה** „wegschauen“ soll mitgehört werden, bzw. nach Delitzsch und Hengstenberg⁹¹ ist **שעע** ohnehin nur so etwas wie eine Nebenform von **שעה**. Der Beter spielt neuerlich

werden, so dass diese Stellen nicht gegen eine Anwendung auf den Messias sprechen. So wird die Aussage über den Gottesknecht in Jes 52,13 („er wird Erfolg haben und hochhaben sein“) vom Tg explizit auf „den Messias“ angewandt, die Niedrigkeitsaussagen in V. 14 aber sofort auf Israel: „die Finsternis der Angehörigen der Völker war ihr Aussehen“. Bei Augustinus wird dieselbe Auslegungstechnik von Christus „in persona capitis“ (Jesus) und „in persona corporis“ (Kirche) sprechen. Der sarkastische Zug im (hebräischen) Psalmtext behindert keine christologische Anwendung.

⁸⁹ L. ALONSO SCHÖKEL, *Salmos*. Traducción, introducciones y comentario, vol. I (Estella 1992) 577f., mit Verweis auf W. VISCHER, *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments* I (München 1934 [Zürich 1946]) 87. In der griechischen Übersetzung werden „Abel“ und „Adam“ nicht sichtbar: *πλὴν μάρτην ταραύσσονται* (V. 7) *πλὴν μάρτην ταραύσσεται πᾶς ἄνθρωπος* (V. 12).

⁹⁰ ALONSO SCHÖKEL, *Salmos*, 581.

⁹¹ F. DELITZSCH, *Die Psalmen* (Leipzig⁵ 1894) 306; E. W. HENGSTENBERG, *Commentar über die Psalmen* II (Berlin² 1850) 323f.

auf Kain und Abel an, denn hinter der Aufforderung „blick weg!“ steht die Aussage: Es ist ja bekannt, was einem blüht, auf den du blickst, wie damals auf Abel! In Gen 4,4-8 heißt es: „Der Herr schaute (וַיִּשַׁע) auf Abel und seine Gabe, aber auf Kain und seine Gabe schaute er nicht (לֹא שָׁעָה) [...] Da [...] erhob sich Kain gegen Abel, seinen Bruder, und tötete ihn“⁹². Der Beter, der ohnehin todgeweiht ist wie Abel, bittet Gott, wenigstens noch einmal wegzuschauen, denn Gottes Blick provoziert einen vorzeitigen Tod, wie man aus Genesis 4 weiß. Der Beter verhöhnt sarkastisch die Aussage über die Gottesstatue in Genesis 1 (das Ebenbild ist ein Trugbild!), vergleicht Gott mit einer korrodierenden Motte (Ps 39,12), sich selbst aber mit Abel, dem ungerecht und allzu früh aus dem Leben Gerissenen. In Psalm 39 betrachtet ein verzweifelter Beter Genesis 1–4⁹³.

In Ps 39,10 verstummt David endgültig, dieses Mal nicht mehr aus eigenem Entschluss. er kapituliert, denn Gott selber hat ihn geschlagen: „Ich bin verstummt, ich tue den Mund nicht mehr auf. Denn du hast gehandelt“ גַּאֲלַמְתִּי לֹא אֶפְתַּח-פִּי כִּי אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ. Gott hat gehandelt, indem er nichts tat und seinen König zugrunde gehen ließ. David hatte sich an seinen Ratsschlag aus Psalm 37 gehalten und war angesichts der Gewalt gewaltlos geblieben. Es ist ihm übel bekommen, denn Gott hat nicht eingegriffen. Aber selbst noch die Resignation Psalm 39 war Torameditation des idealen Königs.

Doch dann setzt Psalm 40 ein:

Ich hoffte, ja ich hoffte auf den HERRN. Da neigte er sich mir zu und hörte mein Schreien. Er zog mich herauf aus der Grube des Grauens, aus Schlamm und Morast. Er stellte meine Füße auf Fels, machte fest meine Schritte. Er gab mir ein neues Lied in den Mund, einen Lobgesang auf unseren Gott. Viele sollen es sehen, sich in Ehrfurcht neigen und auf den HERRN vertrauen (Ps 40,2-4).

Der eben noch resigniert Verstummte singt ein neues Lied, denn er wurde aus der Grube heraufgezogen und kann Gottes Wundertaten verkünden, die möglichst viele mitbekommen sollen.

Auch Psalm 40 wird wieder in neue Klage münden (VV. 12-18)⁹⁴. Der Zyklus von Klage zum Lob wird sich noch viele Male im Psalter wiederholen. Ich meine aber gezeigt zu haben, dass die Sequenz der Psalmen 36–40 ein Beispiel dafür ist, wie der David des Psalters als Vorbild für die neutestamentliche Christologie dient: Der in allem versuchte, aber

⁹² Vgl. ALONSO SCHÖKEL, *Salmos*, 586.

⁹³ Genesis 3–4 hat nur selten im AT nachgeklungen: außer Psalm 39 und Psalm 36 noch Wsh 10,3.

⁹⁴ BÖHLER, *Psalmen*, 740-744.

gewaltlos gebliebene König leidet schweigend und geht zugrunde, weil Gott nicht eingreift. Dann aber wird er aus der Grube gezogen und singt ein neues Lied.

Psalm 41 ist die zum Abschluss einer Kompositionsgruppe zu erwartende weisheitliche Reflexion: „Selig wer Einsicht gewinnt am Schwachen“ (Ps 41,2). Der Schwache, so Psalm 41, ist ein *locus theologicus*, an dem Gott erkannt und gefunden werden kann⁹⁵. Paulus wird das „das Wort vom Kreuz“ nennen, das nicht Torheit, sondern Kraft, ja Weisheit ist (1 Kor 1,18f.).

Die eben besprochene Psalmenserie wird im NT auch ausdrücklich für die Christologie herangezogen: Im Matthäus-Evangelium zitiert der predigende Christus in der Bergpredigt Psalm 37. Lukas deutet die Passion Christi u. a. mit Psalm 38. Und der Hebräerbrief wird Psalm 40 zur Deutung des Werks Christi heranziehen⁹⁶.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wenn die Evangelisten das nicht leicht zu verstehende Geschick des Jesus von Nazareth als Geschick des Messias verstehen wollen, ziehen sie als Interpretament den David des Psalters heran — wohlgemerkt: nicht nur einzelner isolierter Psalmen wie Psalmen 22 und 69, sondern den David des zusammenhängenden Psalters. Der Auferstandene verweist die Emmausjünger nicht auf einzelne Psalmen, sondern auf deren Gesamtheit, auf das, was er in Lk 20,42 „das Buch der Psalmen“ nennt. Denn erst in der Abfolge der Psalmen und ihrem Zusammenhang ersteht das Bild Davids, des Gesalbten des Herrn, der versucht wird, der der Versuchung zur Gewalt widersteht, der verfolgt wird, leidet und verstummt und noch in der tiefsten Verzweiflung die Tora meditiert, um schließlich, von Gott aus der Grube gezogen, ein neues Lied in den Mund gelegt zu bekommen.

Es ist tatsächlich so, wie Erich Zenger schreibt:

„Die neutestamentliche Christologie ist weithin ‚Psalmen-Christologie‘. ... Indem das Neue Testament die ersttestamentlichen Psalmen zitiert, sollen dadurch nicht die Psalmen ausgelegt werden, sondern es gilt: Mit den Psalmen und von den Psalmen her wird Jesus als der Christus bezeugt und ausgelegt.

⁹⁵ F.-L. HOSSFELD – E. ZENGER, „Selig, wer auf den Armen achtet (Ps 41,2). Beobachtungen zur Gottesvolk-Theologie des ersten Davidpsalters“, *JBTh* 7 (1992) 21-50, 27.

⁹⁶ Hebr 10,5-7.

... Daß die frühe Kirche gerade im Rückgriff auf die Psalmen alle falschen Christologien, die Jesus zum griechischen Gott machen wollten, abgewehrt hat, ist hochbedeutsam“⁹⁷.

Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule
Sankt Georgen
Offenbacher Landstraße 224
D-60599 Frankfurt

Dieter BÖHLER

SUMMARY

The article shows that the Psalter as a book, that is, the Psalms in their sequence, tell a story that runs parallel to the Books of Samuel, to which the titles of several Psalms refer. The portrait of David thus sketched in the Psalter — as the Anointed who suffers and is persecuted but rescued by God — is a primary source for the Christology of the evangelists. The rescue of the Messiah from persecution and suffering leads the nations to convert to the God of Israel. This is exemplified in the sequence of Psalms 36–40.

⁹⁷ E. ZENGER, „«Daß alles Fleisch den Namen seiner Heiligung segne» (Ps 145,21). Die Komposition Ps 145–150 als Anstoß zu einer christlich-jüdischen Psalmenhermeneutik“, *BZ* 41 (1997) 1–27, 22.

JÉSUS, LES SICAIRES ET L'IMPÔT: NI RÉSISTANCE, NI LUTTE SOCIALE ¹

Très tôt, dès le IV^e siècle de notre ère, est apparue une théorie selon laquelle Jésus était un révolutionnaire juif ². Il aurait même été proche, selon certains, des sicaires, ce parti terroriste qui menait contre la domination romaine une série d'attentats-symboles ³. Cette idée a regagné en visibilité au XIX^e siècle, dans la recherche du "Jésus historique" et fut tout particulièrement popularisée en 1967 par Samuel Brandon ⁴.

Il serait impossible d'être exhaustif ici sur les arguments qui fondent une telle assimilation, mais quelques-uns suffiront. Jésus ne fait-il pas, à plusieurs reprises, des déclarations ambiguës? "Je ne suis pas venu apporter la paix mais l'épée", dit-il (Mt 10,34); "Si quelqu'un veut me suivre, qu'il renonce à lui-même, qu'il se charge de sa croix et qu'il me suive" (Mt 16,24), la croix étant le châtiment des sicaires. Il invite ses disciples à acheter une épée (Lc 22,36) et l'un n'hésite pas à s'en servir au jardin de Gethsémani (Mt 26,51; Mc 14,47; Lc 22,49-50; Jn 18,10), etc. Dès lors, Samuel Brandon conclut que les évangélistes ont dissimulé la véritable identité de Jésus et construit, après coup, leur personnage de paix afin que son échec ne signât pas la fin de leur mouvement. Marc aurait, par exemple, transformé "Judas le Sikarios" en "Judas Iscariote" ou encore transcrit "Simon le Zélote" ⁵

¹ Ce texte fut premièrement lu à Metz le 29 septembre 2021 dans le cadre des «mercredis du CRULH». Il portait alors le titre "Jésus était-il un activiste antifiscal?". Le présent auteur remercie Léonard Dauphant et Julien Léonard pour leur invitation, ainsi que les divers membres de l'assistance pour les riches échanges.

² Voir la mise au point de W. HORNBURY, "Christ as Brigand in Ancient Anti-Christian Polemic", *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (eds. E. Bammel – C.F.D. Moule) (Cambridge 1984) 183-195.

³ Le terme de "terroristes" pour les sicaires est largement admis depuis la démonstration de R.A. HORSLEY, "The Sicarii: Ancient Jewish 'Terrorists'", *The Journal of Religion* 59 (1979) 435-458. Sur ce parti, voir essentiellement M. HENGEL, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden 1961); D. M. RHOADS, *Israel in Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA 1976); C. MÉZANGE, *Les Sicaires et les Zélotes* (Paris 2003), même si la bibliographie devient pléthorique.

⁴ S.G.F. BRANDON, *Jésus et les zélotes* (éd. orig. 1967; Paris 1975). Pour un point historiographique établi en réaction à cet ouvrage, voir E. Bammel, "The Revolution Theory from Reimarus to Brandon", *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (eds. E. Bammel – C.F.D. Moule) (Cambridge 1984) 11-68. Pour des réponses critiques à la théorie de Brandon, voir M. HENGEL, *War Jesus Revolutionär?* (Stuttgart 1970); O. CULLMANN, *Jesus und die Revolutionären* (Tübingen 1970).

⁵ Notons que "sicaires" et "zélotes" sont alors tenus par Brandon comme synonymes, ce qui n'est pas du tout évident. Sur le sens de l'épithète de Simon, voir C. MÉZANGE, "Simon le Zélote était-il un révolutionnaire?", *Biblica* 81 (2000) 489-506.

en araméen “Cananite”, pour dissimuler l’engagement politique des disciples (Mc 3,18-19). Après tout, Jésus n’a-t-il pas été accusé en son temps devant Pilate d’être un révolutionnaire (Lc 23,2 et 5)? N’a-t-il pas été crucifié entre deux brigands? Sa croix n’était-elle pas ornée d’un écriteau le nommant “roi des Juifs”? Sa fréquentation des déserts et son éloignement permanent des Romains, l’absence totale de toute condamnation des révolutionnaires dans son discours, ainsi que de nombreux autres versets ambigus, sont allégués dans ce sens ⁶.

L’une des causes de cet engagement de Jésus dans la résistance est en général trouvée dans le contexte socio-économique de la région sous occupation romaine. Selon la théorie de Richard Horsley et de Douglas Oakman en particulier, Jésus, proche de la petite paysannerie, aurait été témoin de son appauvrissement et de la constitution de grands domaines aux mains d’une poignée de riches collaborant avec les Romains. Il aurait conçu une haine des élites et un désir de rétablir la justice divine contre l’injustice de la société de son temps ⁷. Qu’ils acceptent ou non ce rapprochement entre Jésus et les sicaires, les exégètes utilisent souvent ces travaux. Même ceux qui voient en Jésus un pacifiste situent son action dans une région globalement paupérisée, dans laquelle s’accroissaient les inégalités sociales. L’impôt serait un drain permanent vidant la Judée de ses ressources, appauvrissant les masses, haï par tous.

Jésus, en clair, parmi d’autres éléments, s’opposerait à l’impôt au nom de considérations sociales, et en accord avec les sicaires. Son célèbre aphorisme “rendez à César ce qui est à César, et à Dieu ce qui est à Dieu”, est de plus en plus compris comme une forme d’ironie ou de “hidden transcript”, une forme déguisée de contestation de l’impôt romain ⁸. Et, en 2015, Fernando Bermejo Rubio allait jusqu’à l’affirmer franchement: quiconque prétendrait que le calme régnait en Judée romaine le ferait pour des raisons

⁶ Parmi tant d’autres, voir P. FREDRIKSEN, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* (New York 1999); W.R. HERZOG, “Onstage and Offstage with Jesus of Nazareth: Public Transcripts, Hidden Transcripts, and Gospel Texts”, *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance* (ed. R. HORSLEY) (Leiden – Boston, MA 2004) 40-60; W. STEGEMANN, *Jesus und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart 2009); R.A. HORSLEY, “Jesus and the Politics of Roman Palestine”, *JSHJ* 8 (2010) 99-145; F. BERMEJO RUBIO, “Jesus and the Anti-Roman Resistance. A Reassessment of the Arguments”, *JSHJ* 12 (2014) 1-105; IDEM, “Was Pontius Pilate a Single-Handed Prefect? Roman Intelligence Sources as a Missing Link in the Gospels’ Story”, *Klio* 101 (2019) 505-542.

⁷ D.E. OAKMAN, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day* (Lewiston – Queenston 1986); R.A. HORSLEY, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco, CA 1987); IDEM, *Jesus and Empire* (Minneapolis, MN 2003); K.C. HANSON – D.E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis, MN 2008). Voir aussi, plus subtil, BERMEJO RUBIO, “Jesus and the Anti-Roman Resistance”, 28.

⁸ Pour un aperçu historiographique, voir M. GIRARDIN, *L’offrande et le tribut. Histoire politique de la fiscalité en Judée hellénistique et romaine* (Bordeaux 2022) 388-393.

non-scientifiques, afin de dissimuler le projet véritable de Jésus, qui était de soulever les foules; que les vrais chercheurs savent que Jésus était un révolutionnaire ⁹.

Ce panorama général contient un certain nombre d'hypothèses, de postulats et d'inexactitudes. Il a même tendance à reposer largement sur les analyses anthropologiques de Horsley, lequel, comme l'a signalé Nadav Sharon en 2017, s'il a bien démontré que les préconditions au banditisme social étaient en effet réunies en Judée au I^{er} siècle, n'a pas véritablement prouvé que le banditisme était uniquement social ¹⁰. Beaucoup d'historiens restent convaincus que la résistance était davantage politique qu'économique. Dans une mise au point collective récente sur la révolte de 66-73, aucun auteur n'a pointé la moindre considération économique comme cause des tensions: c'est toujours la religion et son lien avec la politique qui apparaît ¹¹. D'ailleurs, Susan Sorek l'écrivait déjà: si les causes avaient été économiques, les non-Juifs de Judée auraient participé au soulèvement, ce qui n'est pas le cas ¹².

Pris séparément, les divers éléments de ce modèle général conçu par Horsley et Oakman, et les conclusions sur l'idée que Jésus fut un activiste antifiscal, semblent très fragiles. Afin de réexaminer la question, on propose de changer la focale ordinairement adoptée pour cette tâche. On ne glosa pas une nouvelle fois sur le sens des diverses péripécies évangéliques concernées, car cette voie semble sans issue dans des débats peut-être trop passionnés. En fait, c'est à partir de données différentes, issues de la recherche concernant les sicaires et l'agitation anti-romaine, que l'on démontrera combien ce modèle s'avère inapplicable. On procédera en trois temps, constatant premièrement que les sicaires n'ont aucun rapport avec la paysannerie mais semblent constituer surtout un groupe urbain, dirigé par une poignée de riches plus ou moins affiliés à la caste sacerdotale. On examinera ensuite ce qui peut être connu aujourd'hui du rapport des sicaires à la question fiscale, non seulement à l'aide de l'œuvre de Flavius Josèphe, mais également des centaines d'ostraca qu'ils ont eux-mêmes produits et employés durant leur séjour dans la forteresse de Masada. Il s'avère que les sicaires eux-mêmes ont levé des impôts, en général plus

⁹ F. BERMEJO RUBIO, "Sub Tiberio quies? La situación política en Judea bajo los prefectos (6-41 e.c.), entre realidad e ideología", *Gerión* 33 (2015) 131-165.

¹⁰ N. SHARON, *Judea under Roman Domination* (Atlanta, GA 2017) 361-377.

¹¹ A. GIAMBRONE (ed.), *Rethinking the Jewish War*. Archeology, Society, Traditions (Leuven – Paris – Bristol 2021). Voir de même X. LEVIEILS, "Le messianisme dans le judaïsme chrétien", *Encyclopédie des messianismes juifs dans l'Antiquité* (eds. D. HAMIDOVIC – X. LEVIEILS – C. MÉZANGE) (Louvain – Paris – Bristol 2017) 333-390, qui n'évoque aucun élément économique.

¹² S. SOREK, *The Jews against Rome. War in Palestine* (New York 2008) 27.

oppressifs que ceux des Romains. Enfin, on verra que l'impôt romain, s'il n'était peut-être pas léger, n'en demeurerait pas moins adapté aux conditions économiques des assujettis et que son rejet est davantage idéologique qu'économique. Dans ce cadre, si même les sicaires ne sont pas des activistes antifiscaux, et quel que soit le lien que l'on peut leur imaginer avec Jésus, il est très improbable que Jésus se soit opposé à l'impôt, en tout cas pour les raisons socioéconomiques généralement examinées.

I. LES SICAIRE N'ONT CURE DE LA MISÈRE PAYSANNE

La première attestation de l'idéologie amenée à devenir celle des sicaires date du recensement de Quirinius. En l'an 6 de notre ère, après la déposition d'Archélaos, le légat propréteur de Syrie est chargé de dresser l'inventaire des biens et des personnes de la nouvelle région dépendant de sa province. C'est alors que se lève Judas le Galiléen, selon Flavius Josèphe, qui s'oppose au recensement et à l'impôt qui ne tardera pas à être établi à l'aide de ces registres. Certains chercheurs en déduisent que l'arrivée des Romains implique une augmentation fiscale ¹³, ce qui n'est en rien soutenu par l'œuvre de Josèphe. Déjà, puisque Judas tente d'empêcher la tenue du dénombrement, cela implique que celui-ci n'est pas achevé: l'impôt n'est donc pas encore prélevé qu'il est déjà contesté ¹⁴. Ensuite, on ne saurait faire de cette motivation économique, absente dans les sources, la motivation principale des rebelles. Ceux-ci, si l'on en croit l'historien antique, évoquent essentiellement des questions théoriques que l'impôt met en évidence et se demandent si l'on peut légitimement se soumettre à César sans renier Dieu ¹⁵. Troisièmement, cette question posée par Judas aux premiers jours de la domination romaine n'est pas une innovation: on la retrouve déjà aux temps hasmonéens et elle paraît fortement répandue dans les diverses écoles juives depuis au moins un siècle alors ¹⁶. Elle ne saurait être mise en lien avec une prétendue augmentation fiscale d'époque romaine. Enfin, un examen sociologique, même rapide, des rebelles de

¹³ S. APPLEBAUM, "Judaea as a Roman Province: the Countryside as a Political and Economic Factor", *ANRW* II, 8 (1977) 345-396, ici 374; M. SARTRE, *L'Orient romain* (Paris 1991) 362; G. BRIZZI, "Ancora sui rapporti tra Romani, Parti ed Ebrei e il controllo della Mesopotamia", *Judaea Socia — Judaea Capta* (ed. G. URSO) (Pisa 2012) 229-247, ici 240; B.W. ROOT, *First Century Galilee* (Tübingen 2014) 23.

¹⁴ F. UDOH, *To Caesar What Is Caesar's* (Providence, RI 2005) 243.

¹⁵ M. GIRARDIN, "À l'origine d'une dialectique nouvelle: l'offrande et le tribut dans la pensée de Judas le Galiléen", *Res Antiquae* 12 (2015) 67-76.

¹⁶ GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 186-189, pour le slogan au temps de Judas Maccabée.

l'an 6, suffit à montrer combien cette théorie est infondée. L'immense majorité des Juifs se soumet sans résistance au recensement, et c'est bien cela qui inquiète Judas (Jos., *A.J.* XVIII, 3-4). On n'observe pas de soulèvement populaire.

Judas lui-même, qui conteste l'impôt romain, n'a rien d'un paysan. Si l'on retient son identification avec cet autre Judas qui, à la mort du roi Hérode, s'emparait du palais de Sepphoris (*B.J.* II, 56), il serait alors fils d'un Ézéchias présenté certes par Josèphe comme un "chef de brigands" (*B.J.* II, 56; *A.J.* XVII, 271-272), mais qui était vraisemblablement un survivant du parti hasmonéen d'Aristobule II et, à ce titre, un grand aristocrate représentant le parti supplanté par Antipater et son fils Hérode ¹⁷. Judas ne représente donc pas vraiment la paysannerie opprimée. Il est essentiellement un opposant politique, représentant d'un parti anti-hérodien et anti-romain qui lutte pour d'autres motivations que l'impôt. Dans son discours, il n'examine pas le moindre effet économique, il ne voit dans l'impôt qu'une marque d'apostasie: il faisait honte aux Juifs, écrit Josèphe, "de payer tribut aux Romains et de reconnaître, outre Dieu, des maîtres mortels" (*B.J.* II, 118).

C'est dans la famille de Judas que se structure peu à peu le parti sicaire. Ses fils Jacob et Simon sont crucifiés par Tiberius Alexander aux alentours de l'an 48 et, si l'on en croit Josèphe (*A.J.* XX, 102-103), ils sont la preuve de la continuité d'une activité anti-romaine familiale. Son petit-fils, Menahem, précipite le soulèvement de 66 en s'emparant par la force de la citadelle de Masada, puis il pénètre dans Jérusalem avec ses hommes afin de prêter main-forte à la foule qui assiège la forteresse Antonia. Il manifeste alors clairement ses ambitions monarchiques ¹⁸. Après son assassinat par les partisans d'Éléazar, son groupe se replie à Masada sous la direction d'un parent, Éléazar ben Jaïr, dernier membre de la famille. Ces différents personnages font davantage penser à une dynastie influente et bien identifiée par la foule, aux ambitions dangereuses pour l'ordre public, qu'à des paysans ruinés luttant pour la justice ¹⁹. Aucun des discours que Josèphe

¹⁷ Parmi les travaux les plus récents, voir A.K. MARSHAK, *The Many Faces of Herod the Great* (Grand Rapids, MI 2015) 75-82; G. BRIZZI, 70 d.C. *La conquista di Gerusalemme* (Roma 2015) 48-49; SHARON, *Judea under Roman Domination*, 374-375; M. HADAS-LEBEL, *Hérode* (Paris 2017) 40.

¹⁸ R.A. HORSLEY, "Menahem in Jerusalem. A Brief Messianic Episode Among the Sicarii – not 'Zealot Messianism'", *NovT* 27 (1985) 334-348; MÉZANGE, *Les Sicaïres et les Zélotes*, 32.

¹⁹ Pour le lien familial, voir J.S. KENNARD, "Judas of Galilee and His Clan", *JQR* 36 (1946) 281-286; HENGEL, *Die Zeloten*, 87; MÉZANGE, *Les Sicaïres et les Zélotes*, 36, 46, 56; BERMEJO RUBIO, "Sub Tiberio quies?", 139-140; M. RAVALLESE, "La nascita dei Sicari. Dall'ἀρχιληστής Ezechia al σοφιστής Giuda il Galileo", *Appunti Romani di Filologia* 21 (2018) 25-47; M. GIRARDIN, "L'idéal théocratique de Judas le Galiléen, une histoire de

leur prêtre n'évoque les misères paysannes: les sicaires prétendent toujours se battre pour la cause divine, contre un Empire considéré comme une puissance néfaste, dans une guerre d'envergure eschatologique. Ils ne parviennent d'ailleurs pas à obtenir le soutien populaire et se retrouvent très vite chassés de Jérusalem ²⁰.

On peut porter le regard sur les autres meneurs rebelles. Éléazar ben Hanania, le meurtrier de Menahem et fondateur du groupe des zélotes aux premières heures de la révolte, était capitaine du temple et fils de l'ancien grand-prêtre Ananias. Celui-ci était loin d'être populaire: il corrompait assidument les procurateurs romains et les grands-prêtres en fonction après lui, selon le témoignage hostile de Josèphe (*A.J.* XX, 204-205), ses serviteurs s'emparaient des dîmes des prêtres en frappant, s'il le fallait, leurs légitimes bénéficiaires, accroissant les inégalités sociales au sein de la caste sacerdotale (*A.J.* XX, 206-207). Quelque part entre 62 et 64, il commence à jouer double-jeu en laissant les sicaires échanger des otages contre rançon et négocie auprès du procurateur Albinus afin qu'ils obtiennent satisfaction (*A.J.* XX, 208-210). Quand, enfin, la révolte éclate, la maison d'Ananias est incendiée par la vindicte populaire; l'ancien grand-prêtre lui-même est découvert dans les égouts et assassiné avec son frère par les sicaires.

Si Ananias n'a rien d'un Robin des bois antiques, son fils n'est pas davantage le reflet d'une paysannerie déclassée. Vengeant la mort de son père en massacrant Menahem (ce qui prouve qu'il ne le reniait pas), il participe au gouvernement révolutionnaire composé d'anciens aristocrates proromains, dont l'objectif est de modérer la foule en attendant le retour des Romains ²¹. Il est alors nommé stratège de l'Idumée (*B.J.* II, 566) et disparaît de l'histoire. On sait qu'un de ses frères, Simon ben Hanania, a tenté de convaincre le procurateur Florus d'intervenir pour ramener la paix alors que la révolte commençait (*B.J.* II, 418) et un ostrakon publié en 1989 atteste la présence à Masada d'un certain "Aqavia ben Hanania le grand prêtre" ²². Il y a de quoi se demander si la famille n'a pas cherché à se positionner sur tous les tableaux, ce qui remettrait en cause l'aspect "révolutionnaire" des actions d'Éléazar. De surcroît, le groupe qui l'entoure était majoritairement constitué de prêtres; les monnaies

famille", *Les solidarités familiales dans la production d'idées et de textes* (eds. D. HAMIDović – X. LEVIEILS – C. MÉZANGE) (Leiden – Boston, MA à paraître).

²⁰ Sur la méfiance populaire, voir HORSLEY, "The Sicarii: Ancient Jewish 'Terrorists'", 458; MÉZANGE, *Les Sicaires et les Zélotes*, 97.

²¹ R.A. HORSLEY, "Power vacuum and power struggle in 66-7 C.E.", *The First Jewish Revolt* (eds. A.M. BERLIN – J.A. OVERMAN) (London 2002) 87-109.

²² Y. YADIN – J. NAVEH, *Masada I. The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions* (Jerusalem 1989) 37-38, ostrakon n° 461.

frappées par les zélotes, durant la guerre, indiquent une idéologie profondément sacerdotale et un désir de restaurer le prestige de la prêtrise, mais aucune revendication sociale ²³. Un point non négligeable, c'est qu'Éléazar estime que Menahem lui-même lui est socialement bien inférieur (*B.J.* II, 443).

Ni les sicaires, ni les zélotes, n'appartiennent donc aux classes sociales les plus basses ²⁴. Pas davantage Jean de Gischala ou Simon bar Giora, les grands chefs qui s'illustrent durant la guerre. Le premier est un notable, qui a profité des désordres pour "rançonner" la Galilée, selon le mot de Josèphe. Ce mot dissimule peut-être un prélèvement de nature fiscale comparable à celui que, lui-même, lève dans la région à la même époque, afin de financer sa guerre. Jean dispose pour ce faire de 400 hommes expérimentés (*B.J.* II, 589). Puis il trafique l'huile de Galilée avec la Syrie, commerce qui lui apporte d'importants profits (*B.J.* II, 591-592 et *Vita* 13), de même qu'il semble en mesure de disposer à sa guise du blé impérial saisi par les rebelles (*Vita* 13). Il se retrouve deux fois associé aux principaux notables de Tibériade (*B.J.* II, 599 et 615). Rebelle de la dernière heure, Jean paraît jouer sa propre partie qui le mène jusqu'à diriger un groupe puissant à Jérusalem. Il ne constitue pas un archétype de paysan ruiné ²⁵. De son côté, Simon bar Giora joue certes la carte sociale: il entretient la haine des riches, libère les esclaves (*B.J.* IV, 508), et sur les monnaies qu'il fait frapper à Jérusalem, il révèle un souci pour une théocratie plus "démocratique" ²⁶. Mais en même temps, il est lui-même un rebelle tardif ²⁷, aux ambitions monarchiques ²⁸, et entouré d'aristocrates (*B.J.* IV, 353 et 510). Il semble donc employer l'argument social de manière démagogique. Les deux hommes sont membres de catégories sociales aisées ²⁹.

Pourquoi, alors, veut-on faire d'eux des champions de la cause populaire? Sans doute pour des raisons simples: si les sicaires sont des "social bandits", alors l'insurrection devient facile à comprendre, il suffit de prendre le parti des pauvres opprimés contre les oppresseurs étrangers. Cela revient à donner de fait raison aux rebelles, dont le soulèvement ne

²³ M. GIRARDIN, "The Propaganda of the Jewish Rebels of 66-70 C.E. according to their Coins", *SJC* 14 (2016) 23-40.

²⁴ MÉZANGE, *Les Sicaires et les Zélotes*, 94-97.

²⁵ U. RAPPAPORT, "John of Gischala: From Galilee to Jerusalem", *JJS* 33 (1982) 479-493.

²⁶ GIRARDIN, "The Propaganda of the Jewish Rebels of 66-70 C.E. according to their Coins", 34.

²⁷ RAPPAPORT, "John of Gischala: From Galilee to Jerusalem", 493.

²⁸ M. RAVALLESE, "Simone bar Giora e la presa di Aluro: storia di un tiranno e di un traditore", *Appunti Romani di Filologia* 19 (2017) 31-60.

²⁹ M. GOODMAN, *The Ruling Class of Judaea* (Cambridge 1987) 201-206.

peut être que justifié. Si l'on estime que, puisqu'ils se révoltent, l'impôt devait être oppressif, on dégage un jugement moral sur la fiscalité romaine. Mais une telle conclusion serait piégeuse. Comme on peut l'apprendre des travaux menés depuis trois décennies en sociologie fiscale et en psychologie sociale de l'impôt, la contestation des prélèvements n'a jamais de lien avec leur montant ³⁰. La résistance à l'impôt n'est pas une science exacte, qui permettrait de modéliser des taux "acceptables" et des taux "inacceptables". En vertu du fameux "paradoxe de Montesquieu", énoncé par le philosophe des Lumières dans son traité *De l'Esprit des lois* (XIII, 12), l'impôt peut être lourd quand les contribuables reconnaissent la légitimité du gouvernement mais ne peut qu'être léger en tyrannie. Tout comme l'on peut parler en météorologie de température réelle et de température ressentie, il faudrait reconnaître que l'impôt ressenti n'est pas en lien direct avec l'impôt réel et qu'il n'y a aucune objectivité à qualifier un prélèvement de "lourd". Dès lors, ce n'est pas parce que les Juifs se soulèvent que l'impôt est élevé ³¹: en fait, formulées ainsi, ces deux propositions paraissent même n'avoir aucun rapport.

II. LES SICAIRES SONT FAVORABLES À L'IMPÔT

Les sicaires ne sont pas les champions de la lutte sociale. Bien au contraire, ils ne renient pas le principe même de l'impôt. Judas le Galiléen ne conteste qu'une seule des formes fiscales qui pèsent sur la population juive, lorsqu'il se soulève durant le recensement de Quirinius: celle qui manifeste la soumission à César. Pourtant, cette fiscalité elle-même n'est pas entièrement nouvelle: elle n'est jamais qu'une reconduction à peine modifiée de la fiscalité hérodienne, laquelle était héritée en grande partie des structures hasmonéennes, elles-mêmes essentiellement adaptées de la fiscalité séleucide qui, enfin, paraît avoir été établie par les rois lagides au III^e siècle avant notre ère ³². Il ne s'agit pas de prétendre que Rome faisait preuve de peu d'inventivité fiscale, bien entendu, car ce serait se

³⁰ Voir en particulier G. SCHMÖLDERS, *Psychologie des finances et de l'impôt* (Rennes 1973); J.L. CAMPBELL, "The State and Fiscal Sociology", *Annual Review of Sociology* 19 (1993) 163-185; E. KIRCHLER, *The Economic Psychology of Tax Behaviour* (Cambridge 2007); M. LEROY, *L'impôt, l'État et la société* (Paris 2010); A. SPIRE, *Résistances à l'impôt, attachement à l'État* (Paris 2018).

³¹ A. KEDDIE, *Class and Power in Roman Palestine. The Socioeconomic Setting of Judaism and Christian Origins* (Cambridge 2019) 129-130; GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 29-30.

³² Sur cette longue histoire, voir M. GIRARDIN, *La fiscalité dans le judaïsme ancien* (Paris 2020).

méprendre sur la capacité romaine à s'adapter aux réalités locales et à improviser, parfois à faire preuve de créativité³³. Mais Rome évitait autant que possible de perturber une situation fiscale qui fonctionnait très bien. Les réformes fiscales sont toujours des moments de tension qu'une puissance étrangère fait mieux de s'abstenir de provoquer³⁴. Quand elle mettait les pieds dans une région depuis longtemps accoutumée à l'impôt, elle avait donc l'habitude de ne retoucher qu'à la marge, dans une logique de rationalisation, une structure qu'elle reprenait globalement à son compte, préférant l'ordre que facilite la stabilité aux crises qu'engendrent les réformes³⁵. Judas ne s'oppose donc pas à une innovation, mais au fait que cette structure, devenue autrefois la fiscalité "patrimoniale" si l'on peut dire, sous la houlette de rois "ethniques" (hasmonéens puis hérodiens), se retrouve de nouveau confisquée par un maître étranger, c'est-à-dire "païen".

Cette structure n'est pas non plus toujours très claire, parce que l'impôt romain était payé par les communautés locales, lesquelles percevaient, afin de le payer, leurs propres revenus³⁶. Contester l'impôt romain, c'est contester un prélèvement qui n'est qu'une abstraction au niveau du contribuable, si tant est que ce terme puisse correspondre à une réalité antique: les Juifs ne paient que des impôts juifs à des communautés juives. Il ne faut pas non plus oublier le contexte social dans lequel les Anciens évoluent, dans lequel il n'est pas rare que l'impôt d'une collectivité soit couvert par des dons évergétiques. Et il est même possible que les communautés aient indistinctement perçu ces divers produits revenant aux Romains et aux structures locales, mais aussi les revenus du temple, une autre fiscalité qui pesait peut-être sur 30% des produits agricoles chaque année pour la paysannerie³⁷. Or, Judas ne conteste rien de tout cela. Il paraît même estimer que les impôts du temple sont des prélèvements légitimes et, après lui, tous les groupes juifs rebelles opposent "l'offrande" (un terme par lequel on prétend définir cette fiscalité dont la nature est

³³ J. FRANCE, *Tribut. Une histoire fiscale de la conquête romaine* (Paris 2021), montre bien cette double réalité, faite de récupérations et d'adaptations.

³⁴ Sur ce point, solidement attesté dans les autres sciences humaines, voir en particulier SCHMÖLDERS, *Psychologie des finances et de l'impôt*, 64; KIRCHLER, *The Economic Psychology of Tax Behaviour*, 40-41.

³⁵ Ce point fait consensus chez les spécialistes. Pour des raisons d'économie, on ne citera que FRANCE, *Tribut*, 29. Pour un bilan historiographique, voir GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 307 n. 70.

³⁶ Parmi tant d'autres références, voir P. KRITZINGER, "Das römische Steuersystem in der Kaiserzeit: Überlegungen zur Begrifflichkeit und zum Einzug", *MBAH* 36 (2018) 89-143, ici 101-128, pour ce qui concerne le monde romain. Pour la Judée, voir KEDDIE, *Class and Power*, 138; GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 319-323.

³⁷ Sur ce calcul, voir GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 109-110.

dissimulée sous l'apparence de la pitié et de la spontanéité) au "tribut"³⁸. Judas n'est donc pas un activiste antifiscal et ses successeurs à la tête du mouvement sicaire non plus. Ils ne s'opposent pas à l'impôt par principe. Ils ne s'opposent qu'à l'impôt *romain*.

Eux-mêmes n'hésitent pas à recourir à des formes diverses de prélèvements obligatoires. Avant la révolte, les sicaires financent leurs actions par la prise d'otages, si l'on en croit Flavius Josèphe. L'idée de faire payer la rançon par l'ennemi et d'obtenir ainsi, par des coups de force, une somme d'argent employée aux besoins de la cause, n'est pas inintéressante. Les sicaires ne massacrent pas leurs adversaires et leur rendent même la liberté. On peut même se demander, au vu des indices que l'on trouve d'une certaine connivence entre eux et certaines franges de la population, s'ils n'ont pu obtenir des dons plus ou moins spontanés, des repas, un gîte pour une nuit. Voire, de manière plus structurée dans les espaces qu'ils contrôlaient, des formes primitives de dons globalement forcés, que l'on pourrait nommer "impôts révolutionnaires", sur le modèle de guérilleros contemporains. Mais cela reste bien sûr spéculatif.

C'est essentiellement la manière dont les rebelles financent leurs activités une fois la guerre déclenchée, qui s'avère riche d'enseignement sur l'idéologie financière des opposants. Bien sûr, on pourrait arguer que la situation exceptionnelle nécessitait des moyens exceptionnels, et il serait bien impossible de prétendre que ces structures sont représentatives. Elles n'en restent pas moins véritablement établies par ces partis qui, au moins dans des cas de force majeure, dira-t-on, n'ont pas renié l'impôt comme un mode de financement acceptable. Toutefois, la liste de ces prélèvements, leur nature, et la manière dont elles sont justifiées, laissent profondément penser que les rebelles ne trouvaient rien d'inapproprié pour un Juif à payer l'impôt. Rappelons que tous partagent l'héritage de la bible hébraïque, dans laquelle la richesse de Salomon, notamment fiscale, est célébrée comme un âge d'or de la puissance d'Israël.

Commençons cet examen par Flavius Josèphe lui-même. Nommé stratège de la Galilée pour le compte de l'État révolutionnaire naissant, il mobilise toutes les ressources de son domaine: il fortifie les villes, lève une armée, désigne des archontes, des anciens et des juges. Afin d'entretenir ses forces, constituées de "la moitié" des hommes, τοὺς ἡμίσεις (*B.J.* II, 584), il employait aux champs l'autre moitié des populations des villes soumises à son autorité. Quel était son taux de prélèvement sur ces activités, il ne le précise pas. Mais les uns sont mobilisés de force, le travail des autres est confisqué. Puis il présente cette cotisation à l'effort de guerre comme un échange: le blé (τὰ σῖτα) contre la sécurité (ἀσφάλεια = *B.J.* II, 584).

³⁸ GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 295-413.

L'argument n'est pas anodin, et deux éléments peuvent être signalés. Premièrement, ce discours selon lequel l'impôt n'est que la contrepartie de la paix, le mode d'entretien des armées qui permettent la stabilité de l'ordre public, n'est jamais qu'une récupération de la légitimation romaine des prélèvements fiscaux³⁹. Josèphe utilise à son compte un outil rhétorique romain pour asseoir ses prélèvements et, s'il reprend le discours, c'est que le principe fiscal n'est pas rejeté. Deuxièmement, il ne précise pas contre qui il entend défendre ces villes. L'ambiguïté est soigneusement entretenue, dans son ouvrage écrit pour les Romains⁴⁰. À l'inverse, avant son arrivée, écrit-il, Jean de Gischala ne se privait pas de "rançonner" la Galilée (ἐλῆξτεο = *B.J.* II, 589). Pour des raisons évidentes, Josèphe ne s'attarde pas à démontrer combien ses mesures, ce prélèvement sur le travail de la moitié de la population, sont plus légères que celles de son adversaire, aussi faut-il prendre avec prudence son observation qui caractérise la légitimité selon lui du prélèvement, davantage que sa nature. Dans son autobiographie, il n'hésite plus à écrire qu'il a fait payer aux villes le salaire de ses propres hommes, afin qu'ils ne les attaquent pas (μιστοφορά = *Vita* 77), et on le retrouve en train de s'efforcer de convaincre son armée de ne pas piller les villages autour de Gabara (*Vita* 244). Manifestement, le stratège de Galilée fait aussi payer sa protection contre ses propres troupes. C'est pour cette raison que Richard Horsley le considère comme le plus grand racketteur de la Galilée cette année-là⁴¹. Josèphe, en Galilée, a recouru sans vergogne à un prélèvement de nature fiscale imposant afin d'entretenir son effort de guerre. L'impôt était, pour lui, un expédient légitime pour une cause légitime.

La même chose peut être dite des sicares assiégés dans Jérusalem, durant l'année 70. Si le tableau que fournit Josèphe est noirci par l'hostilité qu'il leur voue, il n'en laisse pas moins transparaître quelques indices. Jean de Gischala, désormais chef d'une partie de la ville, continue à entretenir un trésor, alimenté par des spoliations (*B.J.* IV, 379). Selon la formule de Josèphe, sont alors considérés comme traîtres ceux qui ne donnent

³⁹ Voir Cicéron, *Lettres à Quintus*, I, 1, 11: "Que l'Asie songe aussi que nulle calamité liée aux guerres extérieures et aux discordes intérieures ne lui serait épargnée si elle n'était rattachée à cet empire: et comme celui-ci ne peut aucunement se maintenir sans impôt (*sine uectigalibus*), elle doit, d'une âme égale, acheter avec une part de son produit la pérennité de la paix et du calme". Voir aussi Tacite, *Histoires*, IV, 74, 2: "Il ne peut y avoir la paix entre les peuples sans armée; il n'y a pas d'armée sans solde, ni de solde sans impôt (*tributis*)". Sur cette politique, voir J. FRANCE, "Tributum et stipendium. La politique fiscale de l'empereur romain", *RHDFE* 1 (2006) 1-17.

⁴⁰ Josèphe prétend n'avoir jamais attenté aux biens des Romains et avoir toujours voulu les leur rendre: il dit cela des biens pillés dans le palais de Tibériade (*Vita* 65-69), du blé impérial saisi en Haute Galilée (*Vita* 71-73), des biens de Ptolémée, intendant d'Agrippa II (*B.J.* II, 595 et *Vita* 128-131).

⁴¹ HORSLEY, "Power Vacuum and Power Struggle", 100.

rien: on notera que c'est une expression qu'il avait déjà employée pour caractériser les prélèvements fiscaux exceptionnels au temps du procureur romain Albinus (*B.J.* II, 273). Dans sa narration, les zélotes de Jean ne valent pas mieux que les Romains. Dans les faits, Jean semble avoir poursuivi, à Jérusalem, le système de prélèvements obligatoires qu'il percevait en Galilée, possiblement de manière violente.

Un autre parti, celui d'Éléazar ben Simon, s'enrichit en détournant à son profit les offrandes apportées au temple par les pèlerins (*B.J.* V, 8 et 21). Il se finance donc par des apports financiers directs, mais sans lever de nouvelles contributions que celles dont toutes les écoles juives reconnaissent la légitimité, parce qu'elles sont prescrites par la bible hébraïque. On observe donc un positionnement devant le fait fiscal quelque peu différent: si Éléazar perçoit bien des impôts, d'un point de vue financier, il paraît exprimer en revanche une réserve idéologique contre tout prélèvement qui ne serait pas sacerdotal. Cela n'empêche pas que Josèphe le présente comme également impie que Jean, puisque l'historien lui dénie l'usage de ces sommes en déniaient toute légitimité à ses actions rebelles. Parce qu'il paraît illégitime, son mode de financement est illégitime. Mais du point de vue d'Éléazar, qui se bat pour protéger Jérusalem et son sanctuaire, il ne s'agit peut-être que d'appliquer à son profit cette idée biblique selon laquelle ceux qui se battent pour le temple peuvent être nourris par lui ⁴². Cette doctrine est même clairement affirmée par Jean de Gischala quand, plus tard dans le siège, à bout de vivres, il emploie l'huile des holocaustes et le vin des libations pour nourrir ses hommes (*B.J.* V, 562-565). Or, le fait même qu'en pleine guerre, des pèlerins continuent à affluer et à déposer leurs offrandes dans les caisses d'Éléazar, suffit à entrevoir que beaucoup de Juifs lui reconnaissent la légitimité de son combat et n'ont pas peur de s'en remettre à son autorité.

Enfin, le troisième parti rebelle, celui de Simon bar Giora, exploite, écrit Josèphe, les dépouilles laissées par ses adversaires (τροφή, *B.J.* V, 21). Qu'entend-il par-là? Ce n'est pas clair. Mais on peut comprendre que Simon aussi, au nom de l'effort de guerre, emploie les biens des particuliers pour nourrir ses hommes. La formulation elle-même laisse entendre qu'aucun des trois partis ne dépossède totalement les habitants, mais que tous se contentent de percevoir une part des réserves. Et si Éléazar peut percevoir des offrandes, c'est que ses adversaires n'empêchent pas les pèlerins de monter à la ville haute. Ces considérations permettent de

⁴² V. NIKIPROWETZKY, "Josephus and the Revolutionary Parties", *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (eds. L.H. FELDMAN – G. HATA) (Leiden 1989) 216-236, ici 234, développe cette doctrine à partir de 1 S 21,4-7 et Mt 12,1-5.

penser que le mode de financement des trois groupes rebelles n'était pas un pillage éhonté et irraisonné. Plus encore: il y a des foules qui soutiennent de leurs biens ces divers partis.

Il est évident que ces récits concernant le siège n'ont aucune vocation historique: Josèphe cherche surtout à démontrer qu'aucun groupe n'est exempt de souillure et que la purification de Jérusalem nécessitait sa destruction. À cette fin, ne se prive-t-il pas d'écrire, les Romains ne sont que le bras armé de Dieu (*B.J.* V, 19-20). Décrivant les souffrances dans la ville, il aurait pu mettre en scène l'héroïsme de la résistance, souligner que Jérusalem n'a cédé aux Romains qu'au prix de son sang: non, il parle de "rapines", de "séditieux", de "tortures", et va jusqu'à laisser entendre que les rebelles sont tombés dans le cannibalisme par volonté davantage que par nécessité ⁴³. Josèphe a choisi son camp, et il ne faut pas se tromper en le lisant. Il veut persuader que ce sont les rebelles qui ont fait du mal à la cité sainte et l'ont souillée, non les Romains ⁴⁴. Mais dans les divers récits qu'il fournit des spoliations, il laisse entendre que le financement a consisté en saisies aussi bien en métaux précieux, monnayés ou non, qu'en nature ⁴⁵. Il est question d'un trésor public qui prenait à sa charge les salaires des combattants et les enterrements des défunts ⁴⁶, dirigé par un certain Manneos fils de Lazare, chargé pour cet office de tenir le compte des vivants et des morts (*B.J.* V, 568). S'il y a recensement et salaire, les saisies d'argent en sont clairement le corollaire, c'est-à-dire des prélèvements de nature fiscale, destinés à couvrir les charges publiques. Les hommes de Jean et de Simon, contrairement à ce que prétend Josèphe, ne se contentent pas de prendre, ils paraissent donner aussi. Il y a donc une organisation financière dans la cité assiégée, tournée vers l'effort de guerre.

Ils font de même à Masada. Les sicaires, qui se sont réfugiés en 66 dans cette forteresse au milieu du désert après le meurtre de Menahem, ne

⁴³ En *B.J.* VI, 212, il écrit que des hommes trouvèrent une femme en train de manger son propre enfant non encore sevré. Il ajoute que ce n'est pas sans regret qu'ils n'y ont pas touché.

⁴⁴ Pour cette conclusion avec d'autres approches que celle du financement, voir parmi d'autres T.D. BARNES, "The Sack of the Temple in Josephus and Tacitus", *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (eds. J. EDMONDSON – S. MASON – J. RIVES) (Oxford 2005) 129-144, ici 132-133.

⁴⁵ En *B.J.* V, 421 et 550, des fuyards avalent leur or pour éviter les pillages. En *B.J.* V, 428 et 432-438; VI, 195, il s'agit de saisies de blé qui conduisent à la famine et au marché noir. En *B.J.* V, 436, il s'agit de remplir les greniers.

⁴⁶ En 68, Antipas, alors responsable du trésor public (τοὺς δημοσίους θησαυρούς), est exécuté lors du renversement du parti révolutionnaire modéré (*B.J.* IV, 140). Mais ce trésor est encore attesté plus tard: pour les enterrements ἐκ τοῦ δημοσίου θησαυροῦ (*B.J.* V, 518) et pour le salaire des combattants (δημοσίᾳ μισθόν, *B.J.* V, 568).

vivent pas seulement des réserves entreposées par Hérode. Ils mènent également des raids dans les campagnes alentour, pillant les bourgs tombant sous leur influence, mais, précise Josèphe : “sans prendre plus que le nécessaire” (*B.J.* IV, 400-401). Cette surprenante modération correspond mal à l’image de pillages violents d’une bande de terroristes sur d’innocentes populations. Visiblement, les sicaires de Masada ne font des razzias qu’afin de soutenir leurs besoins et ne souhaitent pas amasser d’inutiles richesses. Ils couvrent leurs frais par des saisies sur les particuliers, sans ôter sa vie à personne, sans détruire les richesses. Ce mode de financement, et cela est bien connu, n’est qu’une forme archaïque de la fiscalité : il est couramment admis que l’impôt n’est qu’une évolution apaisée de la razzia ⁴⁷.

Or, les sicaires semblent se construire un territoire, sur lequel les habitants sont mis à contribution forcée pour la cause commune. Et quand ils reçoivent la proposition de marcher de nouveau sur Jérusalem, ils la rejettent, préférant rester là, à l’écart, en paix, que revenir au cœur de la lutte contre les Romains (*B.J.* IV, 506). Ils ressembleraient presque à de grands feudataires exploitant leur domaine en fondant sur les granges avec leurs troupes. Mais ils ont également adopté une philosophie proprement fiscale : celle de ne pas prendre au-delà du nécessaire. L’impôt n’est jamais qu’une part des biens, que le contribuable perd en échange de la sécurité et de la jouissance du reste de ses propriétés. Les prélèvements des sicaires sont donc constitués de rentrées irrégulières, *ad hoc*, sous forme de razzias violentes, dans lesquelles on serait en peine de reconnaître les actions d’une communauté de contestataires de l’impôt, émus par la misère paysanne. Il est fort possible que plusieurs de leurs victimes auraient préféré continuer à payer le tribut romain que d’être “libérées” à ce prix. La situation des campagnes sous l’autorité des sicaires ne paraît en rien meilleure à celle créée par l’impôt romain.

Pour finir, les sicaires de Masada ont fait usage de centaines d’ostraca ⁴⁸ qui, entre autres, permettent de se faire une idée de leur structuration financière interne ⁴⁹. L’étude permet de déterminer que les sicaires reversent à leurs prêtres une part des biens saisis lors des razzias, ce qui indique qu’à leurs yeux, ces revenus ne sont pas rituellement impurs, mais leur reviennent de droit en raison de leur cause. Ils semblent avoir tâché de mettre leurs biens en commun dès avant le siège de la forteresse par les

⁴⁷ Voir par exemple M. CORBIER, “De la razzia au butin. Du tribut à l’impôt. Aux origines de la fiscalité”, *L’État moderne : genèse* (ed. J.-PH. GENÉT) (Paris 1990) 95-107.

⁴⁸ Ces ostraca sont publiés par YADIN – NAVEH, *Masada I*; H. COTTON – J. GEIGER, *Masada II. The Latin and Greek Documents* (Jerusalem 1989).

⁴⁹ Sur le détail de l’analyse, voir GIRARDIN, *L’offrande et le tribut*, 407-411.

Romains, puisque l'un des documents, l'ostracon n° 577, est daté du mois d'Ab (juillet-août), et que la place n'a été assiégée que de septembre 72 à avril 73 si l'on suit la chronologie joséphienne, voire seulement une période de quelques semaines durant ces deux extrêmes selon les traces archéologiques⁵⁰. Ce choix n'est donc pas contraint par l'investissement romain. Des responsables administratifs fournissent aux différents contingents des denrées alimentaires précises: aux ouvriers, aux porteurs, "au camp", aux prêtres, etc. Ces responsables établissent sur les ostraca un formulaire qui n'est pas sans rappeler celui des documents fiscaux d'époque romaine retrouvés au wadi Murabba'ât, et l'on pourrait aller jusqu'à se demander si Masada n'a pu avoir recours aux services de scribes qui, auparavant, travaillaient dans les bureaux de l'impôt⁵¹. Enfin, deux ostraca pourraient laisser imaginer qu'une forme de capitation a pu être prélevée (n° 779 et 780), mais la pauvreté de l'information conduit à admettre que l'indice demeure faible.

Après cette liste d'éléments concernant le rapport des sicaires et des zélotes à l'impôt, peut-on encore voir ces partis comme des "social bandits" luttant contre l'injustice fiscale des Romains? Les sicaires ne sont pas des activistes antifiscaux. Ce qu'ils contestent, c'est le *tribut*, c'est-à-dire l'expression de la domination étrangère impliquée par le prélèvement, non tant l'impôt que l'impôt *romain*. En revanche, en tant que groupe, ils lèvent eux-mêmes des prélèvements obligatoires, qui donnent même l'impression d'être plus lourds ou, en tout cas, plus violemment perçus que les prélèvements romains. En clair, ils ne sont pas des paysans ruinés: ils n'ont aucun mal à envisager une structure dans laquelle ils pourraient vivre des contributions forcées des paysans sous leur autorité.

III. L'IMPÔT ROMAIN EST ADAPTÉ AUX CONDITIONS DE LA JUDÉE

Il faut donc en finir avec les théories qui associent sans examen la résistance à la lourdeur économique de l'impôt romain. D'un point de vue strictement comptable, l'impôt romain était léger; il n'était lourd que dans les consciences, parce qu'il était la matérialisation de la soumission à une puissance étrangère.

La réputation de la fiscalité romaine est épouvantable dans le cadre étroit de l'historiographie de la Judée, même si les spécialistes de l'Empire en fournissent une tout autre image. Oppressive, violente, démesurée, la

⁵⁰ J. ROTH, "The Length of the Siege of Masada", *SCI* 14 (1995) 87-110.

⁵¹ GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 410.

fiscalité romaine paraîtrait justifier les très légitimes révoltes ayant tâché de secouer son joug. Les citations ne manquent pas, d'auteurs affirmant qu'elle était "injuste"⁵², une forme de "sauvagerie"⁵³, "sans pitié"⁵⁴, "une exploitation systématique"⁵⁵, "brutale" et "fondamentalement oppressive et exploitatrice"⁵⁶, etc. On ne se prive pas de dresser de longues listes des impôts romains, pour conclure que tout était fait pour taxer tout, partout, tout le temps. Ainsi l'écrivait Salo Baron: "l'administration fiscale romaine se révéla d'une ingéniosité extrême pour découvrir de nouveaux objets à frapper d'impositions régulières et extraordinaires"⁵⁷.

Mais ces procédés historiographiques sont trompeurs. Tous les contribuables ne sont pas assujettis à tous les prélèvements, et les droits sur les héritages ne sont à verser, par exemple, que par les seuls citoyens romains (non par les pérégrins), et encore: uniquement pour ce qui concerne les héritages imposants⁵⁸. Les divers droits de passage, douanes, octrois, péages, ne sont versés qu'à l'occasion des voyages et par les catégories d'acteurs qui, en retour, n'ont pas toujours à payer d'impôts agricoles. Bien sûr, on retrouve des avis antiques sur la lourdeur de l'impôt romain; on retrouve par exemple des listes comme celle-ci:

Ainsi fait le royaume d'Ésaü: il lève l'annone mais, avant qu'il en ait terminé avec l'annone, la capitation s'abat sur eux, et avant même qu'elle soit levée on vient chercher des recrues. Comme des épines dont vous vous dégagez d'un côté et qui s'attachent à vous de l'autre, de même, le méchant Ésaü gourmande continuellement: Apporte ta capitation, tes *demisia*, ton annone. Si quelqu'un répond qu'il n'a pas de quoi payer, on lui impose une amende et des pénalités. (*Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, II, 2)

Cet exposé n'a rien d'objectif. La liste est trompeuse, et n'a pour motivation que de soutenir l'idée préconçue de la lourdeur de l'occupation romaine. C'est un jugement polémique qui ne porte pas tant sur la fiscalité, que sur la moralité des Romains.

Produire une liste pour conclure que l'ensemble est imposant est également trompeur si l'on s'intéresse aux incidences de l'impôt. Les fiscalistes ont modélisé les effets que pourrait produire un impôt unique sur une

⁵² Concernant l'annone, ainsi caractérisée: "this pernicious and, as a rule, unjust tax", voir F.M. HEICHELHEIM, *Roman Syria* (Baltimore, MD 1938) 241-242.

⁵³ J.S. KENNARD, *Render to God. A Study of the Tribute Passage* (New York 1950) 28.

⁵⁴ S. APPLEBAUM, "Economic Life in Palestine", *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. II (eds. S. SAFRAI – M. STERN) (Assen 1976) 631-700, ici 660-661.

⁵⁵ G. HAMEL, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine* (Berkeley, CA – Los Angeles, CA – Oxford 1990) 162.

⁵⁶ ROOT, *First Century Galilee*, 22, n. 28.

⁵⁷ S.W. BARON, *Histoire d'Israël*, vol. I (éd. orig 1952; Paris 1986) 353.

⁵⁸ Sur la uicesima hereditatum, voir S. GÜNTHER, "*Vectigalia nervos esse rei publicae*". Die indirekten Steuern in der Römischen Kaiserzeit (Wiesbaden 2008) 23-94.

société: des possibilités de fraude qui ne seraient pas compensées par d'autres prélèvements, un secteur ou une série de secteurs d'activité grevés de manière excessive, des effets économiques pervers associés qui se traduiraient par une instabilité des marchés à l'échelle macro-économique, etc. De manière concrète, un impôt sur les revenus laisserait exempts les rentiers; un impôt sur le capital ne toucherait pas les salariés; une taxe universelle favoriserait ceux qui pourraient produire une part de leur alimentation dans un grand jardin, et cette catégorie serait elle-même perdante devant un simple droit foncier. Aucun impôt n'est juste ni parfait et chaque formule induit des effets négatifs. Selon les fiscalistes, le meilleur équilibre entre l'efficacité des revenus et la justice sociale réside justement dans la multiplication des impôts, dont les qualités intrinsèques des uns compensent les effets pervers des autres. Si un contribuable perd un peu sur l'impôt foncier, il peut être gagnant sur les droits de mutation, et réciproquement, de sorte que, globalement, tout le monde y trouve son compte ⁵⁹. On pourrait donc considérer que la multiplication des impôts est, en soi, la trace d'un souci d'équilibre des revenus et de justice sociale. Il est bien admis, parmi les spécialistes de la fiscalité romaine, que celle-ci avait pour but de répondre aux besoins et non d'enrichir l'Empire: c'était un impôt de répartition ⁶⁰. Rome aurait pu prélever une somme globale forfaitaire et ne s'occuper en rien de l'asseoir sur la réalité de la situation socioéconomique régionale, mais c'eût été aussi inutile que dangereux.

De plus, de nombreux impôts ne pèsent rien si leurs taux sont faibles, et c'est bien le cas des impôts romains, dont les taux sont même, selon la formule d'Arnold Jones, "fantastically low" ⁶¹. Les taux ordinaires s'élèvent à 1%, 2%, 2,5% le plus souvent, parfois 5% de la valeur imposée. Afin de faire une simple comparaison, le seul impôt sur les revenus, en France, en 2021, s'élève au taux de 11% pour les plus bas revenus, et s'y ajoutent les autres prélèvements, dont la taxe sur la valeur ajoutée dont le taux s'élève à 20% pour la plupart des transactions. D'un point de vue strictement comptable, il serait difficile de dire que l'impôt romain est lourd. Mais cela concerne les situations où Rome a créé l'impôt. En

⁵⁹ L. WEBER – M. ZARIN-NEJADAN – A. SCHÖNENBERGER, *Économie et finances publiques* (Paris 2017) 243-277.

⁶⁰ W. SCHEIDEL, "The Early Roman Monarchy", *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States* (eds. A. MONSON – W. SCHEIDEL) (Cambridge 2015) 229-257, ici 253: "the fiscal regime [...] was satisficing, not maximizing, in its ambitions and outcomes".

⁶¹ A.H.M. JONES, *The Roman Economy* (Oxford 1974) 161. Voir aussi P.A. BRUNT, "The Revenues of Rome", *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford 1990) 324-346, ici 346; P. GARNSEY, *Famine et approvisionnement* (éd. orig. 1988; Paris 1996) 320.

Orient, il existe une ancienne culture fiscale, différente de celle-ci, souvent beaucoup plus lourde, il est vrai. Mais comme le système n'était, souvent, que la continuité des structures antérieures, il n'y a pas eu de bouleversement majeur: l'arrivée des Romains n'a pas changé les montants, mais la seule signification des paiements. En fait, les seules traces que l'on possède de retouches du système fiscal en vigueur en Judée, sont des abolitions et des dégrèvements. En 37, Vitellius abolit la taxe sur les ventes prélevée au marché (τὰ τέλη ὠνουμένων καρπῶν, *A.J.*, XVIII, 90) et, en 41, Agrippa abolit un impôt hiérosolomytain sur les maisons (τὰ ὑπὲρ ἐκάστης οἰκίας, *A.J.*, XIX, 299). Il s'agit peut-être de réductions ponctuelles et non d'abolitions définitives, mais il s'agit néanmoins de preuves, s'il en faut, que le pouvoir romain n'est pas insensible aux éventuelles difficultés des contribuables, non plus qu'aux enjeux politiques et démagogiques que représente l'abaissement des prélèvements. Ainsi, quand des gouverneurs de province suggèrent d'accroître les impôts (*onerandas tributo*), Tibère répond qu'un bon pasteur doit tondre les brebis, non les écorcher (Suétone, *Tibère*, XXXII, 5). Rome n'a jamais conçu la fiscalité comme un drain des ressources des provinces, mais comme un outil politique facilitant l'ordre social et l'intégration des peuples gouvernés.

Cette structure était également établie sur un registre des biens et des personnes, produit en Judée à l'occasion du recensement de Quirinius. Rome a tâché de savoir la fortune de la région afin d'asseoir ses prélèvements; il est évident que ce n'était pas pour dépasser ensuite ces capacités. Alors certes, on peut trouver les indices d'augmentations fiscales tardives, à partir de la procuratèle d'Albinus (62-64 de notre ère). La plupart des chercheurs, désormais, supposent qu'il s'agit de perceptions d'arriérés d'impôts, et cela est fort possible ⁶². Mais cela ne veut pas dire que l'impôt était excessif, seulement qu'il n'était pas payé. D'autres raisons que la misère peuvent entrer en ligne de compte, il se peut simplement que beaucoup n'ont plus envie d'offrir leur soumission par ce biais, ainsi l'ar-rérage serait la conséquence de la montée de l'hostilité. Il peut également y avoir des prélèvements nouveaux, éventuellement exceptionnels; ils pourraient être liés au contexte difficile pour l'Empire sur le front oriental avec la reprise de la guerre contre les Parthes et la défaite de Rhandaia

⁶² Parmi tant d'autres, voir BRANDON, *Jésus et les zélotes*, 149; R.A. HORSLEY – J.S. HANSON, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs* (Minneapolis, MN 1985) 62; GOODMAN, *The Ruling Class*, 152; W. STENGER, "Gebt dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist [...]" (Frankfurt am Main 1988) 73-74; H. SCHWIER, *Tempel und Tempelzerstörung* (Göttingen 1989) 174; M. GOODMAN, *Rome et Jérusalem* (éd. orig. 2007; Paris 2011) 554; G. LABBÉ, *L'affirmation de la puissance romaine en Judée* (Paris 2012) 280 n. 6; KEDDIE, *Class and Power*, 191; GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 349-356.

en 62; ils seraient peut-être même liés aux difficultés économiques du principat de Néron, qui s'expriment dès le début des années 60 en Occident ⁶³. Il ne s'agirait pas, alors, d'exactions comme on le lit trop souvent, ni de pillages éhontés de la part des gouverneurs, mais de symptômes d'une crise plus globale ⁶⁴, généralisée à l'échelle de l'Empire et nécessitant une perception plus attentive des arriérés, voire une hausse des revenus. Les prélèvements ordonnés par le dernier des procurateurs, Florus, pourraient être liés à l'incendie de Rome en 64, puisque Tacite et Suétone écrivent que Néron a "dévasté" l'Italie et "pillé" les provinces afin de relever l'*Urbs* ⁶⁵. Il existe donc un faisceau d'indices pour dire que la fiscalité est devenue, plus lourde ou, au moins, plus rigide, dans les dernières années avant le soulèvement. Avant les années 60 de notre ère, on ne peut trouver aucune attestation de prélèvement fiscal causant quelque difficulté. On trouve seulement, au temps de Caligula, une menace de grève de l'impôt de la part de ceux qui contestent à l'empereur le droit de faire entrer sa statue dans le temple de Jérusalem (A.J. XVIII, 273-274). L'impôt n'est pas, alors, le nœud du problème.

On peut donc penser que l'impôt était léger ou, s'il ne l'était pas, du moins était-il adapté aux réalités du terrain autant que faire se pouvait; et qu'il ne fut accru qu'en proportion de l'augmentation des besoins de l'Empire, dans une période financièrement difficile. La situation de la Judée ne semble en rien exceptionnelle, cette province parmi tant d'autres a été mise à contribution pour l'intérêt commun. Ce contexte immédiat a pu participer de l'accroissement des tensions dans la région, mais la situation économique "ordinaire" durant les soixante années précédentes ne paraît pas avoir été si dramatique qu'on le lit souvent.

En fait, ce serait même le contraire. De manière globale, on sait que l'urbanisation du monde romain a surtout été permise par la rétention locale des tributs ⁶⁶. Les élites locales, engagées dans la collecte comme on l'a vu, ont souvent fait des profits qui ont permis l'enrichissement des communautés pérégrines ⁶⁷. Récemment, Anthony Keddie a démontré, à l'aide de sources archéologiques, qu'il en est de même en Judée. Loin d'être des parasites ponctionnant une campagne prolétarisée, les grandes villes qui se développent sous la tutelle romaine semblent avoir stimulé la production, en accroissant la demande et, notamment, la demande de

⁶³ S. GÜNTHER, "*Res Publica* oder *Res Popularis*? Die Steuerpolitischen Maßnahmen des 'Schlechten' Kaisers Nero zwischen Haushaltration und Volksfreundlichkeit", *Neros Wirklichkeiten* (ed. C. WALDE) (Rahden 2013) 105-128, ici 121-123.

⁶⁴ GIRARDIN, *L'offrande et le tribut*, 349-350.

⁶⁵ Tacite, *Annales* XV, 45; Suétone, *Néron* 38.

⁶⁶ SCHEIDEL, "The Early Roman Monarchy", 251.

⁶⁷ SCHEIDEL, "The Early Roman Monarchy", 253.

biens manufacturés et de productions à haute valeur ajoutée. L'enrichissement des villes aurait plutôt profité aux campagnes, qui voient se multiplier les gros bourgs prospères et les domaines agricoles. Le développement urbain nécessite même le recours à des ouvriers nombreux, recevant du travail dans des secteurs tels que la taille de la pierre, la maçonnerie, la charpenterie, etc. Mais le développement économique n'allait pas de pair avec l'égalité de répartition, et c'est ainsi, par la stratification socio-économique, qu'Anthony Keddie explique les tensions sociales à l'œuvre à l'époque romaine. Même ceux qui se présentent comme "pauvres", ainsi qu'il le démontre, ne le sont pas tant qu'on pourrait le croire. Les particularités de leur culture matérielle, selon l'historien, seraient essentiellement le fait de choix "de classe", certains voulant polémiquement se présenter comme opposés aux élites et plus traditionnalistes que les classes largement romanisées. Ainsi conclut-il, de l'examen des vestiges archéologiques de la Judée romaine, que Rome n'a ni ruiné, ni spolié la Judée; que les élites juives ont profité des conditions de la paix romaine pour s'enrichir, entraînant dans leur sillage de nombreuses catégories socio-professionnelles, au détriment de certaines qui, néanmoins, n'ont pas été plus pauvres qu'autrefois ⁶⁸.

Ce n'est pas du monde des campagnes et des paysans opprimés qu'est venue la révolte de 66. Ce sont conjointement une décision, de la part des prêtres sous la conduite d'Éléazar le capitaine du temple, d'abolir les sacrifices offerts à Dieu pour le salut de l'empereur, ainsi que la prise de Masada par les sicaires, puis, dans ce climat tendu, l'assaut populaire contre les archives publiques, qui précipitent les événements. Tout cela fait suite à une saisie de 17 talents par le procurateur Florus sur le trésor du temple, qui n'a pas été contestée mais moquée par la majorité des gens du peuple, qui l'imitaient faisant l'aumône, tel un mendiant (*B.J.* II, 296). Ce sont donc des coups de force volontairement provoqués, de la part de partis dirigés par des aristocrates, qui mettent le feu aux poudres, et la violence est le fait d'une population urbaine et non rurale.

Cette foule qui brûle les archives afin, selon Josèphe, de détruire les registres d'endettement (*B.J.* II, 427-428), n'est pas composée de paysans ruinés. Elle pourrait, peut-être, avoir réuni certains des dix-huit mille ouvriers qui se sont retrouvés au chômage deux ans plus tôt, lors de l'achèvement des travaux du temple. On se souvient que ces hommes avaient déjà provoqué une agitation et obtenu un pis-aller, avec la mission de paver les rues de Jérusalem (*A.J.* XX, 220-222). Une fois les rues pavées,

⁶⁸ KEDDIE, *Class and Power*, 16-70 (développement urbain), 197-248 (culture matérielle).

que sont-ils devenus? Josèphe ne le précise nullement, mais on peut se demander s'ils ne sont pas ces milliers d'hommes, qui se soulèvent sous la conduite de quelques agitateurs pour supprimer les titres de prêtres. Leur action ne prouverait donc en rien que l'impôt romain était excessif, mais témoignerait d'une inégale répartition des richesses entre les Juifs, d'une crise sociale qui ne concernait que partiellement les pouvoirs romains, lesquels n'ont servi que de bouc-émissaires. Elle serait moins la conséquence des travaux romains que, au contraire, de leur interruption; elle serait donc l'indice que le moteur économique de la Judée, à l'époque romaine, était essentiellement l'artisanat et non plus l'agriculture. Elle serait, enfin, l'indication d'une crise économique liée à celle qui frappe l'Empire et, plus profondément, l'Orient, la première grogne de ces artisans étant de quelques mois postérieure à la détaille de Randheia et immédiatement contemporaine des prélèvements destinés à relever Rome de ses ruines. Dans un contexte d'augmentation des besoins, donc de hausses d'impôts, les commandes auraient diminué et les artisans auraient été durement touchés.

CONCLUSION

Il n'existe donc, à ce jour, aucune preuve que l'impôt romain ait causé quelque difficulté socioéconomique que ce soit avant les années 60 de notre ère. Ce n'est pas son poids effectif qui dérange les opposants au pouvoir romain, c'est qu'il matérialise la soumission à une autorité étrangère, qu'il manifeste la souveraineté de César sur le peuple de Dieu. Les plus hostiles à l'impôt romain sont issus des classes aisées et sont liés au milieu sacerdotal; eux-mêmes n'hésitent pas à recourir à l'impôt pour soutenir leur combat, parfois de manière plus violente que les Romains. Peut-être l'accroissement fiscal des années 62-66 a-t-il pu contribuer à donner quelque soutien à ces partis, mais ils luttaient déjà quand l'impôt était léger et favorisait l'enrichissement global de la Judée. On ne peut donc prétendre que les sicaires et les autres groupes rebelles étaient des activistes antifiscaux. Et s'ils ne l'étaient pas, alors on ne saurait dire que Jésus, en tant qu'il était proche de leurs milieux, ce qui ne fait pas consensus, s'opposait à l'impôt et à la prolétarianisation des masses. Conclure qu'il fut ou non un résistant politique dépasse les prétentions du présent travail, mais l'idée qu'il fût un opposant à l'impôt pour de simples considérations socioéconomiques paraît insoutenable, au vu des connaissances des réalités socioéconomiques et fiscales de l'administration romaine de la Judée.

À ce stade, l'interprétation traditionnelle demeure crédible. Jésus aurait encouragé ses coreligionnaires à "rendre à César ce qui est à César et à Dieu ce qui est à Dieu" ⁶⁹. Beaucoup remettent en cause la crédibilité d'un tel discours: venant d'un Juif oppressé par l'impôt, ne serait-ce pas une déclaration pleine d'ironie? un *hidden transcript*, c'est-à-dire un message "caché" qui, en apparence, ne conteste pas l'ordre établi mais qui, remis en contexte par le public ciblé, doit évoquer le contraire de ce qu'il dit ⁷⁰? Et si l'on part du principe que tout appartient à Dieu, que reste-t-il à l'empereur ⁷¹? Et peut-être même incite-t-il effectivement à payer, mais de manière polémique, afin de renvoyer en Italie cette monnaie impie qui porte l'image de l'empereur ⁷². Toutes ces hypothèses misent à la fois sur une forte hostilité générale à l'impôt, sur un appauvrissement global, ainsi que sur une forte capacité de décodage d'un message cryptique. Il existe pourtant des preuves que les premiers chrétiens ont compris le discours dans le sens parvenu jusqu'à nous par la tradition ⁷³. À l'inverse, la doctrine selon laquelle Jésus s'opposait à l'impôt n'apparaît qu'au IV^e siècle dans des polémiques ouvertement antichrétiennes ⁷⁴, et cette accusation était reconnue sans honte, mais discréditée comme fausse, par Luc lui-même (Lc 23,2). Jésus n'était pas si pauvre qu'on veut bien le croire et son groupe possédait des biens ⁷⁵. Il était fils d'un charpentier, cette catégorie sociale qui pourrait avoir profité de l'urbanisation causée par la présence romaine. Il pourrait bien n'avoir rien en commun, en fait, avec la paysannerie qui, elle-même, n'était pas plus exploitée à l'époque romaine qu'aux temps antérieurs.

Universitaire du Littoral
Site universitaire du Musée
34 Grande Rue - BP 751
62321 Boulogne-sur-Mer (France)

Michaël GIRARDIN

⁶⁹ Mt 22,21; Mc 12,17; Lc 20,25. Ce point se retrouve même dans le *logion* 100 de l'*Évangile de Thomas*.

⁷⁰ HERZOG, "Onstage and Offstage with Jesus of Nazareth"; BERMEJO RUBIO, "Jesus and the Anti-Roman Resistance", 62.

⁷¹ BRANDON, *Jésus et les zélotes*; HORSLEY, *Jesus and Empire*, 98-99.

⁷² W. CARTER, "Paying the Tax to Rome as Subversive Praxis: Matthew 17,24-27", *JSNT* 76 (1999) 3-31, ici 28-29.

⁷³ Ro 13,1-7; 1 Pi 2,13-17. Voir aussi, au II^e siècle, Justin, *Première Apologie*, XVII, 1-2.

⁷⁴ HORBURY, "Christ as Brigand in Ancient Anti-Christian Polemic".

⁷⁵ J. CORNILLON, *Tout en commun? La vie économique de Jésus et des premières générations chrétiennes* (Paris 2020) 132.

SUMMARY

Did Jesus object to Roman taxes? Many scholars think that he did, like the Sicarii, because of the socioeconomic consequences for the poor. In reality, Roman taxes were not excessive in view of the economic capabilities of the region. Moreover, the Sicarii were led by some wealthy people who did not care about the misery of the poor, and who themselves, in an oppressive fashion, collected some taxes in order to sustain their cause. If the Sicarii were not opposed to the taxes but only to the Roman domination that taxation represented, and if they were not engaged in a social cause, then the image of Jesus' commitment has to be reevaluated.

PORNEIA AND THE MATTHEAN EXCEPTION
(MATT 5,32; 19,9)

While the New Testament would appear to establish the indissolubility of marriage (see Mark 10,10-12; Luke 16,18; 1 Cor 7,10-11), it seems, paradoxically, that Matt 5,32 and 19,9 introduce an exception to this rule. What is the nature of this exception? Is it a real exception? What conditions are required for its application? Does it permit re-marriage? While these questions are not new, the solutions currently proposed seem to be incomplete ¹.

Scholars address these puzzling texts (Matt 5,31-32; 19,1-12) in different ways. Some think that, grammatically, there is no exception. Others propose that there is an actual exception, and these texts of Matthew just contradict the rest of the NT texts. In that case, the meaning of the word *porneia* in Matt 5,32 and 19,9 remains a problem. Does any sexual immorality constitute *porneia*? Is it a breach of the marital bond, as in the case of adultery? Still others try to find a solution befitting the clarity of the other NT texts on the indissolubility of marriage, but without denying the grammatical exception of the texts in Matthew. This last approach is certainly the most appropriate, but it is also the most difficult.

In taking this latter approach, it is important to first determine what is clear and what is not in these verses. It is clear that the language of Matt 5,32 *παρεκτός* (“except”) and Matt 19,9 *μὴ ἐπὶ* (“not upon”, “not in the case”) unequivocally establishes an exception ². What remains unclear, however, is the meaning of the word *porneia*, even if the word *per se* is frequent and normally easy to understand.

The most common meaning of the word *porneia* in the NT is sexual immorality (Matt 15,19; Mark 7,21; Gal 5,19). In these passages the word *porneia* is part of a list of vices, but these instances do not indicate a more specific meaning of the word. According to the common meaning of *porneia*, marriage would be indissoluble unless there is a breach of the

¹ For a bibliography see: A. MAHONEY, “A New Look at the Divorce Clauses in Matt 5:32 and 19:9”, *CBQ* 30 (1968) 29-38, esp. 29 n. 1; J. FITZMYER, “The Matthean Divorce Texts and Some New Palestinian Evidence”, *TS* 37 (1976) 197-226, esp. 197 n. 1; J. COTTIAUX, *La Sacramentalisation du Mariage. De la Genèse aux incises matthéennes* (Paris 1982); H. CROUZEL, “Le sens de «porneia» dans les incises matthéennes”, *NRTh* 110 (1988) 903-910; C. EVANS, *Matthew* (Cambridge 2012) 126.

² FITZMYER (“The Matthean Divorce Texts”, 207 n. 39) excludes the possibility of reading this text in a way other than as an exception.

spousal relationship, as in the case of adultery. This option however is not viable in the context of the NT, where there are clear prohibitions of divorce without exceptions (1 Cor 7,10-11), nor in the context of the passages under analysis (Matt 5,32; 19,9), where the word seems to have a “technical” meaning more specific than the common meaning.

This “technical” meaning, then, is the key to solving this puzzle. There are two hypotheses that would seem to come close to an acceptable solution. The first hypothesis considers the exception to be a real one but limited to very specific cases and without the possibility of re-marriage after separation (1 Cor 7,10). This is proposed by Neudecker, who is an expert in Rabbinic literature and its jurisprudence. He shows that the exception corresponds to the view of the School of *Shammai*. The very same question that the Pharisees ask Jesus was current among the different Rabbinical Schools of *Hillel* and *Shammai*. *Hillel*’s School legislated according to the Pharisees’ view, which seems to have justified divorce for any reason. *Shammai*’s School justified it only in the case of *porneia*, which they defined juridically in a very precise way. For the School of *Shammai*, in the case of *porneia* there was an obligation to send the wife away, but there was not permission to remarry, which means that the marital bond remains ³.

The other hypothesis, proposed by Tosato, considers *porneia* to mean a relationship of incest, which would make the marriage void from the beginning, in which case there would not be a “real” exception at all since marriage could not be established in these circumstances ⁴. This solution is less satisfactory, because his text of reference (Leviticus 18) does not use the word *porneia* in the LXX. He tries to connect such illegitimate marriages with the word *porneia* through the Qumran documents and related literature, but his argument is not convincing. He includes “mixed marriages” under illegitimate marriages; therefore they would fall under the category of *porneia*. The solution proposed in this paper would seem to be similar, but in fact it is not, because the connection of *porneia* with mixed marriages is established in a different way.

³ R. NEUDECKER, “On Adultery and Divorce (Matt 5:27-32)”, *Moses Interpreted by the Pharisees and Jesus. Matthew’s Antitheses in the Light of Early Rabbinic Literature* (SubBi 44; Rome 2015) 57-85; IDEM, “Das «Ehescheidungsgesetz» von Dtn 24,1-4 nach altjüdischer Auslegung. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der neutestamentlichen Aussagen zur Ehescheidung”, *Bib* 75 (1994) 350-387. Similarly, D. JANZEN, “The Meaning of *Porneia* in Matthew 5.32 and 19.9: An Approach from the Study of Ancient Near Eastern Culture”, *JSNT* 80 (2000) 66-80.

⁴ A. TOSATO, “L’istituto familiare dell’antico Israele e della Chiesa primitiva”, *Matri-monio e famiglia nell’antico Israele e nella Chiesa primitiva* (Soveria Mannelli, CZ 2013) 195-207, 264-267 nn. 180-183.

I would like to present a third possible understanding of the word *porneia* that would be compatible with the context of the NT and the context of the texts where the exceptions are mentioned. First, we should look at the meanings of the word *porneia* in the OT and in the NT ⁵. Second, we should attempt to single out which meaning best fits the context of Matthew 5 and 19. Third, we should look at 1 Cor 7,12-17 and consider what kind of exception is presented there. Fourth, we should explore whether a relationship between these two exceptions could be established, what the nature of that relationship is, and how the relationship could have been possibly established.

I. *PORNEIA* IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The root נָהַג is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek root *πορν. The most original meaning of this semantic field expresses one of the ways to “take a woman” according to the OT (see Gen 38,13-23). Tosato in his doctoral thesis distinguishes three possible ways to “take a woman” in the OT: as a prostitute, as a slave, and as wife. This language sounds odd or even unacceptable to modern ears, but it should be understood in its original cultural context ⁶. Taking a woman as a prostitute, even while not commended, is not condemned *per se* in many passages of the OT (see Gen 38,15; Josh 2,1; Judg 16,1; Hos 1,2); rather, it is taken as a given. Certainly, there are negative statements about this manner of “taking a woman” (Prov 23,9), especially when the term is referring, not to women who have sexual relations for profit, but rather to women who have sexual relations outside of marriage (Gen 38,24).

The real condemnation of prostitution is derived from the metaphorical use of this practice. The prophets spoke of prostitution to describe and condemn the idolatry of Israel (Hosea 1–2; Ezekiel 16; 23). Until very recently, all studies understood this condemnation as derivative of the supposed ancient practice of “cult or sacred prostitution”. However, recent studies show that this practice never existed ⁷. Therefore, the use

⁵ Hellenistic-Jewish texts use *porneia* in a way similar to the OT and NT usages of the term; see K. HARPER, “*Porneia*: The Making of a Christian Sexual Norm”, *JBL* 131 (2012) 363-383.

⁶ A. TOSATO, *Il Matrimonio Israelitico. Una Teoria Generale* (AnBib 100; Roma 1982, 2001) 43-62.

⁷ It is not within the scope of this article to fully develop this argument, but the results of recent studies bring great clarity to many doubtful assumptions that have been repeated for more than a century. See, e.g., T.S. SCHEER (ed.), *Tempelprostitution im Altertum. Fakten*

of prostitution as metaphor for idolatry is based on the common practice of prostitution, probably according to the “broad sense” of the term (i.e., the woman who engages in relations outside of marriage but not for gain), although the “strict sense” of the term (i.e., the woman who engages in sexual relations for profit) sometimes could also be intended⁸. The clearest connection between prostitution and idolatry comes from the book of Wisdom, where idolatry is identified as the beginning of *porneia* and the corruption of life (Wis 14,12).

Intermarriage, Idolatry and Porneia

The new perspective on sacred prostitution allows for a fresh reconsideration of the biblical passages that relate intermarriage, idolatry and prostitution. The concept of prostitution is so closely associated with sexual intercourse with a foreign woman in the OT that scholars are uncertain whether Jephthah’s mother was a prostitute, or whether Samson falls in love with a prostitute or simply with a foreign woman (Judg 11,1; 16,1)⁹. The famous story of Num 25,1-18, for example, is usually interpreted as a case of sacred prostitution¹⁰, but it actually deals with the problem of sexual relations with foreign women and intermarriage¹¹. The redactional nature of Numbers 25 is well known¹², and it seems undoubtedly clear that the story of Phinehas was added to the original story of general fornication with foreign women, which the LXX interprets as profanation (ἔβελήλωθη). This intervention of Phinehas is in clear contrast to the attitude

und Fiktionen (Berlin 2009); S. BUDIN, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (Cambridge 2008). Ph. BIRD, “The End of Male Cult Prostitute: A Literary-Historical and Sociological Analysis of Hebrew *Qādeš-Qēdešīm*”, *Congress Volume: Cambridge 1995* (ed. J.A. EMERTON) (VT.S 66; Leiden 1997) 37-80; EADEM, “Of Whores and Hounds: A New Interpretation of the Subject of Deuteronomy 29:19”, *VT* 65 (2005) 352-364. EADEM, *Harlot or Holy Woman. A Study of Hebrew Qedešah* (University Park, PA 2019); Ch. STARK, “Kultprostitution” *im Alten Testament?* Die Qedeschen der hebräischen Bibel und das Motiv der Hurerei (Fribourg 2006); Ch. FREVEL, “Semper aliquid haeret! The accusation of fornication and of sexualized cults as a means of demarcation in the Hebrew Bible”, *Religious Boundaries for Sex, Gender and Corporeality* (eds. A. CUFFEL – A. ECHEVARRIA – G.T. HALKIAS) (London 2019). Interestingly, as Hauck and Schulz noticed, the words *הַקְדֵּשׁ* and *שִׁקְדָּה* are never translated in the LXX as sacred prostitutes: F. HAUCK – S. SCHULZ, “πόρνη κτλ”, *ThWNT* VI, 586.

⁸ K. ADAMS, “Metaphor and Dissonance: A Reinterpretation of Hosea 4:13-14”, *JBL* 127 (2008) 291-305.

⁹ HAUCK – SCHULZ, “πόρνη”, 584.

¹⁰ BUDIN, *Myth*, 37.

¹¹ J. BLENKINSOPP, “The Baal Peor Episode Revisited (Num 25,1-18)”, *Bib* 93 (2012) 86-97.

¹² R. ALBERTZ, “A Pentateuchal Redaction in Numbers? The Late Priestly Layers of Nm 25-36”, *ZAW* 123 (2013) 220-233.

of Moses regarding intermarriage¹³. Intermarriage is seen, then, as a breach of the covenant with YHWH, which subsequently led to sacrifices to *Baal Peor* (Num 25,2). This breach is seen more clearly in Num 31,17, where the children that resulted from the sexual intercourse were to be killed. If they were only the children from prostitution, they would not have constituted a problem for Israel and would have been permitted to remain alive¹⁴.

The connection between idolatry and intermarriage is even clearer in Solomon's story. Solomon's final years and his unfaithfulness to YHWH are related to his many marriages to foreign women (1 Kgs 11,1-13). Here it is not only the metaphor of prostitution which is used to express idolatry but the actual marriage with foreign women that leads to dangerous occasions of idolatry. Sergi even suggests that the role of foreign cults introduced by women at the court of Judah determines the distinction between good and bad kings according to the author of Kings¹⁵.

Ezra 9–10 is without a doubt the most explicit passage that addresses this conflict. This episode has captured the attention of many scholars and has produced various reactions¹⁶. The most negative ones come from feminist scholars¹⁷. After a dispassionate analysis, however, it may be observed that, in fact, the dismissal was not executed, and that the narrative is more of a warning for future generations than an instruction regarding concrete measures to be taken, that is, an invitation to prevent a situation that, once it occurs, has no solution and is a danger for the integrity of the faith of the people (see Deut 7,1-4).

Clearly this negative attitude towards intermarriage is not present in every passage of the OT in which this topic is addressed¹⁸, but it is the predominant attitude towards intermarriage in the deuteronomistic tradition.

¹³ J. FLEURANT, "Phinehas Murdered Moses' Wife: An Analysis of Numbers 25", *JSOT* 35 (2011) 285-294; D. PETTIT, "Expiating Apostasy: Baal Peor, Moses, and Intermarriage with a Midianite Woman", *JSOT* 41 (2018) 457-468.

¹⁴ TOSATO, *Matrimonio*, 61-62.

¹⁵ O. SERGI, "Foreign Women and the Early Kings of Judah: Shedding Light on the Historiographic Perception of the Author of Kings", *ZAW* 126 (2014) 193-207. For a thorough analysis of the foreign women in the Old Testament, especially Proverbs 1–9, see N. TAN, *The 'Foreignness' of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1–9. A Study of the Origin and Development of a Biblical Motif* (BZAW 381; Berlin 2008).

¹⁶ D. JANZEN, *Witch-hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries. The Expulsion of the Foreign Woman in Ezra 9–10* (New York 2002); P.M. VENTER, "The Dissolving of Marriages in Ezra 9–10 and Nehemiah 13 Revisited", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 74 (2018) 1-13.

¹⁷ E. COOK, *Managing Men. Marriage and Masculinities in Ezra 9–10* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing 2019).

¹⁸ L.C. JONKER, "My Wife Must Not Live in King David's Palace (2 Chr 8:11): A Contribution to the Diachronic Study of Intermarriage Traditions in the Hebrew Bible", *JBL* 135 (2016) 35-47.

This concern for the danger of intermarriage already present in Second Temple Judaism weighs in favor of the proposed argument because it shows that identity and separation from the other nations were already a concern for the Jews, as will be the case, at a later time, for the Pauline communities.

To summarize, the OT clearly connects *porneia* (prostitution) to idolatry and, in a secondary way, to marriage with a foreign woman, because it is an occasion for idolatry. This connection happens mostly in the context of the deuteronomistic tradition, which sets at its center the theology of the covenant and Israel as a remnant. It appears safe to say that a marriage with a foreign woman could become *porneia* if it leads to idolatry.

II. *PORNEIA* IN THE NT

Harper's study on *porneia* confirms our previous results and supports the idea that *porneia* acquires a technical meaning for the NT authors and the Early Church, which, in continuation with its use in the OT, serves to establish a clear identity and a separation between Christian and non-Christian¹⁹. He does not consider seriously, however, the difficulties of the Matthean exceptions and implies that an act of dishonor by the woman would justify divorce²⁰.

It is important to reaffirm that apart from the technical meaning discussed above, there is a more common meaning of the word, which is closer to the original meaning of prostitution (Matt 21,31-32; Luke 15,30; John 8,41; Heb 11,31; Jas 2,25). When the root *πορν appears in a list of vices, it seems to have the common meaning of sins of a sexual nature (Matt 15,19; Mark 7,2; 1 Cor 5,11; 6,9; Gal 5,19; Jude 7; Rev 9,21). In other passages, the meaning is ambiguous, leaving room to interpret these instances either in a common or a technical way (Acts 15,20.29; 21,25; Rev 2,14.20-21).

It is clear that the common meaning cannot be applied to Matt 5,32 and 19,9 as already discussed, because it would contradict the immediate context and the clear statement of Mark 10,11-12 and 1 Cor 7,10-11. The only solution is to consider that in Matt 5,32 and 19,9 *porneia* has a technical meaning that was understandable for the Early Church but later became ambiguous due to a change in socio-historical situations. Actually, in a socio-historical context where most people were baptized, marriage with non-Christians was a rarity.

¹⁹ K. HARPER, "The Making of a Christian Sexual Norm", *JBL* 131 (2012) 363-383.

²⁰ HARPER, "The Making of a Christian Sexual Norm", 375-376.

1 Corinthians 5–7 appears to be a good starting point. In these chapters Paul deals with concerns prevalent in the Early Church. Among these concerns are topics that are related to the root *πορν; therefore it is possible to gain a glimpse of the understanding of this semantic field in the context of the NT.

1 Corinthians 5–7

These chapters have ordinarily been considered individually, or, alternatively, chapters five and six together, and chapter seven separately. Berge shows instead that chapters five to seven form a unity, in which chapter six bears the deepest theological meaning, and is foundational for the other two chapters ²¹. The theological center point of chapter six is “Redemption in Christ”. Christ through his death and resurrection gave the human body a new meaning (1 Cor 6,15). This new meaning directs and shapes all pastoral decisions given in these chapters with apostolic authority (see 1 Cor 5,3). Paul is certainly aware of a distinction between what he allows or commands (1 Cor 7,12.17) and what the Lord commands (1 Cor 7,10), but he is not shy in validating his own trustworthiness (1 Cor 7,25).

The union with a prostitute makes the two one body (1 Cor 6,16); the union with Christ makes the believer one spirit with him. This example has to be taken as a pedagogical example, because otherwise the statement would be valid only for male believers, and Paul is obviously speaking to female believers, as well. The real problem with this verse, though, is that the union with a prostitute would be considered equal to marriage, since Paul quotes Gen 2,24 as proof of his statement, and, ironically, the Gospels use precisely this verse to affirm the indissolubility of marriage (Matt 19,5-6; Mark 10,7-8) ²². On the contrary, Paul is trying to show the dignity of the flesh which has been redeemed by Christ and for this reason cannot be given to the desires of the flesh. In this way, Paul invites all believers to shun *porneia* (1 Cor 6,18) not only with regard to sexual immorality but also in the broadest sense of profanation of the body with which believers should glorify God (1 Cor 6,20) ²³.

²¹ L.P.M. BERGE, “Théologie de la rédemption et éthique sexuelle: unité et cohérence du développement; 1 Co 5–7”, *NTS* 64 (2018) 514-531; see also A. MAY, *The Body for the Lord. Sex and Identity in First Corinthians 5–7* (London 2004) 1-16, 205-206, 260-261.

²² The quotation of Gen 2,24 in Eph 5,31, in contrast, seems to be theological and with a profound implication for the theology of marriage.

²³ Although Rosner wrote under the misapprehension that temple prostitution existed, he demonstrates that Paul is inviting Christians to avoid idolatry: B. ROSNER, “Temple Prostitution in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20”, *NovT* 40 (1998) 336-351.

Paul's understanding of redemption and its effects on the bodily dimension of believers provides the theological foundation of the answers that he gives to the issues that the Corinthians present to him in 1 Corinthians 7. It is not necessary to analyze this whole chapter in view of our proposal; suffice it to say that celibacy and marriage are under the same theological umbrella. Celibacy has a given priority (1 Cor 7,38.40), because it better shows the total devotion to Christ, but marriage is equally a way to live the Christian vocation, each one according to the charism that the believer has received (1 Cor 7,7). In this context Paul affirms without a doubt that, according to the Lord, marriage is indissoluble and that in case of a separation there is no possibility of re-marriage (1 Cor 7,10-11). This applies also to the Christians who were called when already married to unbelievers (1 Cor 7,12).

Paul did not recommend intermarriage between believers and unbelievers (2 Cor 6,14-18), but he tolerated it in a manner similar to what was done in the time of Ezra (Ezra 10,12-44) and Nehemiah (Neh 13,23-29). Paul shows a somewhat more positive attitude, though, when considering that the believer can sanctify the unbeliever (1 Cor 7,13-14). This is not a simple "pastoral concession" but rather should be seen in light of Christ's redemption. The body and the whole person have been purchased by Christ (1 Cor 6,20), and so the marriage between believer and unbeliever is not necessarily *porneia* but could rather be a sanctification (1 Cor 7,14) of the unbeliever. Proof of his reasoning is that the children of this intermarriage are "holy" and not "impure" (1 Cor 7,14). Even if Paul does not develop this statement, it seems reasonable to assume that their holiness derives from their incorporation into the church (see Rom 1,7; 11,16; 12,13; 1 Cor 1,2; 6,1-2) through baptism (Rom 6,3-19). Therefore, the decision of the non-Christian partner to leave the Christian spouse was likely related to the partner's lack of acceptance of the baptism of their children. In any case, it is clear that if the non-Christian spouse decides to leave, the marital bond ceases to exist for the Christian spouse (1 Cor 7,15). They may enter into a new marriage, but probably only in the Lord (1 Cor 7,39).

This case seems to be the only exception to the indissolubility of marriage. The unbeliever's willingness to dwell with the believer makes this relationship an indissoluble marriage like every other Christian marriage. The unbeliever's decision to separate frees the believer from the bond (1 Cor 7,15). It is a very specific case but probably not infrequent in those days.

Paul certainly does not call this case *porneia*, but it is reasonable to think that this term could have been used to express the situation of a

Christian who abandons the faith in order to dwell with an unbeliever who does not accept the conditions mentioned above ²⁴. In fact, the believer who gives priority to the relationship with the unbeliever commits *porneia* because this union is no longer sanctification but rather goes against the Christian vocation. The many warnings in the OT against intermarriage indicate that this was a real danger, and it is safe to assume that more than a few believers fell into this situation, losing their Christian identity ²⁵. The danger of falling into this kind of *porneia* might have given the word this very technical meaning in Matt 5,32 and 19,9 ²⁶.

This would also explain why, in the context of later Christianity where intermarriage becomes less common, the word *porneia* was no longer understood with this very specific technical meaning. The difficulty in understanding this term did not lead the Church to deviate from her correct understanding of the indissolubility of Christian marriage. The prohibition of divorce, which is consistent in patristic times, also confirms that the word *porneia* in Matt 5,32 and 19,9 has a technical meaning.

Finally, it is important to point out some similarities between Matt 19,1-12 and 1 Corinthians 7. First, both passages contain a debate on moral issues, and specifically on marriage issues, though 1 Corinthians 7 is clearly more nuanced. Second, in both texts there is a theological foundation for the moral doctrine. Matt 19,4-6 recalls creation and the original unity of man and woman (Gen 1,27; 5,2; 2,24), and Paul derives his teaching from the act of redemption actualized in the Paschal Mystery (1 Cor 6,20). Both texts contemplate human weakness (Matt 19,8; 1 Cor 7,5,9), but do not consider it as an absolute impediment to live according to grace (χάρισμα) (Matt 19,11; 1 Cor 7,7). The most striking similarity between these two texts is the reaction of the apostles in Matt 19,10, who wonder if it is convenient to marry, and the question that the Corinthians put to Paul in 1 Cor 7,1 whether marriage is still an option for Christians. In a

²⁴ Hayes makes a detailed analysis of intermarriage in 4QMMT and *Jubilees*, which includes intermarriage within the category of *zenut* — the Hebrew word for *porneia* — and shows that the rationale for the prohibitions is based on the defilement of the holy seed of Israel: Ch. HAYES, “Intermarriage and Purity in Ancient Jewish Sources”, *HTR* 92 (1999) 3-36. Van Unnik demonstrates a similar concern in Josephus: W.C. VAN UNNIK, “Josephus’ Account of the Story of Israel’s Sin with Alien Women in the Country of Midian (Num 25:1ff.)”, *Sparsa Collecta*. The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik. Part Four: Neotestamentica – Flavius Josephus – Patristica (eds. P.W. VAN DER HORST – C. BREYTENBACH) (NT.S 156; Leiden 2014) 137-157.

²⁵ This is not a totally new proposal; see, e.g., A. MAHONEY, “A New Look at the Divorce Clauses in Matt 5:32 and 19:9”, which lacks an exegetical analysis.

²⁶ This technical meaning could be present in other passages (see, e.g., John 8,41; Acts 15,20,29; 21,25; 1 Thess 4,3).

superficial reading of Matt 19,1-12 the reaction of the apostles appears out of place. If Jesus allows any sexual immorality (*porneia*) to constitute an exception to the indissolubility of marriage, or if he even restricts *porneia* to a serious breach of the marital bond, he is not introducing any novelty which would justify this extreme reaction. Even if he presents a similar view to the School of *Shammai* as Neudecker proposes, this reaction is not justified, because it was already part of Jewish culture. So, what is new in Jesus' proposal that makes the apostles so skeptical about marriage? And why did Jesus respond to their skepticism by speaking about eunuchs? (see Matt 19,11-12).

The newness and the demands of the Kingdom that Jesus proclaims (Matt 19,27-29) seem to justify the apostles' reaction (Matt 19,10). If the disciples are supposed to leave everything, is it convenient to marry? The Corinthians seem to be similarly conflicted about marriage and celibacy (1 Cor 7,1). From this perspective, the replies given by Jesus (Matt 19,11-12) and Paul (1 Cor 7,7.38) clearly match. Celibacy is more akin to the Kingdom of Heaven, but marriage is also accepted because celibacy is not given (δέδοται — a divine passive) to all (Matt 19,11). It is a gift, a charism, which Paul wishes that everyone might have, but he acknowledges that not everyone has received it (1 Cor 7,7).

It seems that the Matthean exception is much more embedded in Paul's view than it would first appear ²⁷. This connection is hard to explain according to the accepted view that the Gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish-Christian community ²⁸, but the similarities between Matt 19,1-12 and 1 Corinthians 7 are striking and call for an explanation. It is not possible to examine this question in a thorough manner in this article. Suffice it to say, however, that according to the New Perspective in Pauline studies, Paul and Matthew are both regarded as representatives of the

²⁷ Most scholars would not consider this influence of Paul on Matthew as even possible, until now; but there are some scholars who would be open to this possibility. J. WILLITTS, "The friendship of Matthew and Paul: A response to a recent trend in the interpretation of Matthew's Gospel", *Hervormde theologiese studies* 65 (2009) 1-8. D.C. Sim also acknowledges that Matthew knew Paul, but according to him Matthew is opposed to Paul's liberal theology: D.C. SIM, "Matthew and the Pauline Corpus: A Preliminary Intertextual Study", *JSNT* 31 (2009) 401-422. B.L. White, on the other hand, denies any Pauline influence on Matthew: B.L. WHITE, "The Eschatological Conversion of 'All the Nations' in Matthew 28.19-20: (Mis)reading Matthew through Paul", *JSNT* 36 (2014) 353-382. Harrington proposes, in a more balanced way, that Matthew could be a response to Pauline theology: D. HARRINGTON, "Matthew and Paul", *Matthew and His Christian Contemporaries* (eds. D.C. SIM – B. REPSCHINSKI) (London 2008) 11-26.

²⁸ Not to mention that the "Synoptic Problem" is still not solved. S.E. Porter suggests that new approaches could open novel avenues: S.E. PORTER, "The Synoptic Problem: The State of the Question", *Journal for Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 12 (2016) 73-98.

so-called apostolic Judaism²⁹. There are then three possible scenarios: first, Paul and Matthew drew from common traditions; second, Matthew influenced Paul; third, Paul influenced Matthew.

It would seem wise to follow the “crucial methodological principle” of J. Willitts: “the interpreter must limit herself primarily to the descriptive task and resist the urge to draw speculative conclusions”³⁰. I would suggest, without the pretense of drawing a conclusion, that it is possible that in a very early stage of transmission the Gospel of Matthew underwent a Pauline revision according to Paul’s kerygma, and that the Matthean exceptions retain some traces of this redaction. Such revisions were not necessary in the Gospel of Luke, which from the beginning reflects Paul’s understanding of the Paschal Mystery³¹. Luke mentions apodictically the indissolubility of marriage but in a very odd context. Bednarz in a fascinating way explains that in Luke 16,18 the saying on the indissolubility of marriage is related to the saying about the impossibility to serve both God and mammon (Luke 16,13)³².

III. REDACTION OF MATT 19,1-12

I would like to conclude by proposing a possible reconstruction of the redactional process of Matt 19,1-12. First, we need to identify the elements of the text that are probable additions. Matt 19,12, the so-called eunuch logion, is the clearest probable addition, because it does not fit easily in the context, which speaks of marriage and not celibacy. Certainly, this logion could apply to those who having been married and separated from their spouse should therefore remain unmarried, as eunuchs do. This meaning would fit the context and should not be excluded. The strength of the language seems to indicate, though, that a more ample spectrum is intended, including those who never marry for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven³³. Matt 19,11 seems to serve as a seam for v. 12 and the rest

²⁹ J. WILLITTS, “Paul and Matthew: A Descriptive Approach from a Post-New Perspective Interpretative Framework”, *Paul and the Gospels*. Christologies, Conflicts and Convergences (eds. M.F. BIRD – J. WILLITTS) (London 2011) 62-85.

³⁰ WILLITTS, “Paul and Matthew”, 65.

³¹ It is interesting that Luke dares to say that the disciple should hate his wife (Luke 14,26), whereas Matt 10,37 makes no mention of this teaching. This could be an indication that the issue of celibacy and marriage was already settled in Luke’s community.

³² T. BEDNARZ, “Status Disputes and Disparate Dicta: Humor Rhetoric in Luke 16:14-18”, *BibInt* 21 (2013) 377-415, esp. 387, 409-410, 415. This connection between indissolubility of marriage and idolatry reinforces our proposal.

³³ A recent article tries to explain the role of this logion through the understanding of the word αἰτία as “guilt” instead of the normal “cause” or “situation”, but the argument

of the pericope. This kind of repetition in v. 11 — οὐ πάντες χωροῦσιν τὸν λόγον (“not everyone grasps this word”) — and in v. 12 — ὁ δυνάμενος χωρεῖν χωρεῖτω (“he who can grasp should grasp”) — is very common in a redactional process. The second candidate for a possible addition is the *porneia* exception (Matt 19,9). It is clear now that this exception creates many problems in its context, and so there is a high probability that it was not present in an earlier version of the text (see Mark 10,11). A third candidate is the response of the apostles: εἰ οὕτως ἐστὶν ἡ αἰτία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μετὰ τῆς γυναικός, οὐ συμφέρει γαμῆσαι (“If this is the situation of the man with the woman, then it is not convenient to marry”, Matt 19,10). Although this verse is not present in Mark’s pericope, the Markan version does say that the disciples questioned Jesus (Mark 10,10). Narrative accounts of the apostles’ reactions to Jesus’ teaching are not unusual and have both dramatic and pedagogical meaning (see Matt 17,10; 19,25). It seems more prudent, then, to consider the reaction of the apostles to be part of the original text, with the awareness that the meaning of these sentences might have changed after the additions were made to the text.

In view of these probable additions, I would propose that the redactional process occurred as follows. The redactor added the *porneia* exception to the indissolubility rule in Matt 19,9 and also in Matt 5,32 for the sake of consistency. These additions bring the Gospel of Matthew in line with the Pauline pastoral approach to marriage between Christians and non-Christians. The reaction of the apostles at this point is now out-of-context, because with the exception to the absolute rule there is no reason to think that marriage is not convenient. Then, at a later time, the reaction of the apostles was understood in light of the perplexity of the Corinthians about whether or not marriage is compatible with the Kingdom of Heaven. This misunderstanding attracts the so-called eunuch’s logion as a correction of the exaggerated reaction of the apostles. In this way, the response of the apostles becomes a hinge between the problem of the indissolubility of marriage and celibacy according to the Kingdom of Heaven.

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is not convincing because it purposely ignores the difficulties of the *porneia* exception; see R.J. VAN TINE, “Castration for the Kingdom and Avoiding the αἰτία of Adultery (Matthew 19:10-12)”, *JBL* 137 (2018) 399-418.

It is only in light of Paul's teaching that these difficult passages seem to acquire coherence. While my proposal might appear to be a circular argument because Paul does not call his exception *porneia* and Matthew does not speak of intermarriage, I would argue that this is not the case, because an influence of Paul in the formation of the New Testament should be, in principle, a real possibility (see 2 Pet 3,14-17). Taking this possibility into consideration brings clarity to these difficult texts and encourages further investigation in this direction.

International Theological Institute
Wien, Austria

Federico M. COLAUTTI

SUMMARY

The so-called Matthean exception to the indissolubility of marriage (Matt 5,32; 19,9) is a *crux interpretum*. This article proposes that the word *porneia* has a technical meaning in these passages, which derives from the Old Testament and early Jewish identification of idolatry with prostitution (not "holy prostitution"). Paul knows of this connection (1 Cor 6,15-20) in his instructions about Christian life in 1 Corinthians 5-7 and, according to him, the believer may remarry if the non-Christian spouse decides to leave (1 Cor 7,15). This Pauline exception is the key to understanding the Matthean one.

CREATION MOTIFS IN JOHN 9 *

I. CREATION MOTIFS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN?

There are two things to clarify before we begin the investigation: (1) What is creation? (2) What is a motif?

What is creation? Creation is the belief that God is the source of everything that exists: God brought everything into existence. Most people only think of creation as the beginning of the universe, but Jewish and Christian traditions also include concepts of God as the sustainer of all things. And there is hope that God will recreate everything in the eschaton. Scholars call these three dimensions *creatio prima*, *creatio continua* (*providentia ordinaria*, *providentia extraordinaria*) and *creatio eschatologica* ¹.

Some scholars do not see any assertions about creation in the Gospel of John apart from the Prologue and John 17 ². There is a consensus that the beginning of the Prologue is linked to the beginning of the creation narrative in Genesis. The Septuagint has the same words: Ἐν ἀρχῇ — “In the beginning” (NRSV, my source for English Bible translations; MT: בְּרֵאשִׁית). The pre-existent Logos of the Prologue (John 1,2) is the agent of creation (“All things came into being through him”, v. 3; cf. also v. 10: “He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him”). In his prayer in chapter 17, Jesus asks his father to give him the glory he had “before the world existed” (v. 5), and he says that his father loved him “before the foundation of the

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¹ Cf. R.A. CULPEPPER, “‘Children of God’: Evolution, Cosmology, and Johannine Thought”, *Creation Stories in Dialogue*. The Bible, Science, and Folk Traditions. Radboud Prestige Lectures in New Testament (eds. R.A. CULPEPPER – J.G. VAN DER WATT) (BibInt 139; Leiden 2016) 3-31, here 13-14; A. SCHNELLENBERG, “Schöpfung (AT)”, <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/27281/>.

² By calling the text as it is reconstructed in NA²⁸ the Gospel of John or simply John, I do not imply that there was only one author named John. Instead, this is simply a traditional way to refer to this text. Whether it contains historical information is another question.

world” (v. 24). According to some scholars, only these four verses in the Prologue relate to creation (1,1-3.10) and nothing else ³, while others include, at most, these two other verses in ch. 17 (vv. 5, 24). Jürgen Becker ⁴ also includes John 5,17: “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is still working, and I also am working’”. The purpose of this article is to question this minimalistic approach. Are there more creation motifs than these obvious ones ⁵?

This brings us to the second question of the introduction: what is a motif? A motif is a “distinctive, significant, or salient theme or idea; a recurrent or prevalent characteristic” ⁶. Hence, I search the Johannine narrative for themes and ideas that seem to be relevant not only in the text itself but also in other passages in John that deal with creation. It will be evident through my analysis that there are indeed such motifs, including light (φῶς), birth (γενετή), works (ἔργα), and formed mud (πηλός).

The next step in the analysis is to examine in more detail the creation motifs that can be found in John 9. If the Prologue is to be understood as a theological prolegomenon to John, then it is likely that we will find traces of creation theology throughout the Gospel since creation is such a prominent aspect in the Prologue.

II. CREATION MOTIFS IN JOHN 9

John 9,6: ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἔπτυσεν χαμαὶ “When he had said this, he spat on the
καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσμα- ground and made mud with the saliva
τος καὶ ἐπέχρισεν αὐτοῦ τὸν πηλὸν and spread the mud on the man’s eyes”.
ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς.

Besides the Johannine Jesus, only the Markan Jesus heals through spitting (πτύω, Mark 7,33; 8,23). Apart from these instances, there are no other healings through spitting in the NT. Moreover, healing by using mud (πηλός) is not otherwise recorded in any book of the NT.

³ Cf. W. SCHRAGE, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments* (GNT Ergänzungsreihe 4; Göttingen 1989) 313.

⁴ Cf. J. BECKER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 2 vols. (ÖTBK 4; Gütersloh 1991) 1:96, 306; see also M. THEOBALD, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*. Kapitel 1–12 (RNT; Regensburg 2009) 117, 420.

⁵ For ongoing research on this topic, see, *inter alios*, R. ZIMMERMANN – Z. SHOUKRY, “Creatio Continua in the Fourth Gospel: Motifs of Creation in John 5–6”, *Signs and Discourses in John 5 and 6* (eds. J. FREY – C.R. KOESTER) (WUNT 463; Tübingen 2021) 87–116, here 88–95.

⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary*, “Motif”, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122686>.

Some interpret the healing of the blind man as (re-)creation ⁷. This investigation will examine the plausibility of such a reading.

1. *John 9 in the Context of other Johannine Creation Motifs*

At the beginning of the episode (John 9,1), the person is introduced as “a man blind from birth” (ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς). Scholars identify creation motifs in this verse ⁸. There are at least two levels of a creation theology in this formulation. On the one hand, τυφλός means not only physical blindness but also metaphorical blindness — living in the darkness without the light (1). On the other hand, the word “birth” (γενετή) also opens up a space for a further creation-theological association, since the Johannine idea of the new birth can also be understood as a discrete act of creation (2) ⁹.

a. Blindness and seeing the light

The Prologue compares the incarnation of Jesus with the moment in which light is created (1,4-5). What the light is for the cosmos, Jesus is for the world. Jesus is the true light, enlightening everyone (1,9). There is a parallel between 1,5 (“the light shines in the darkness”) and 9,5 (“I am the light of the world”) (cf. also 8,12; 12,46). What Jesus does in chapter 9 is consistent with his incarnation: he comes into the world to bring light. In the case of the blind man, it is eyesight. The connection between light and healing is not foreign to the ancient world (e.g., in the Syriac version of *Jub.* 2.8-10, the function of the sun is not only to separate light from darkness but also to heal).

The contrast between light and darkness is underlined by the contrast between day and night (9,4) ¹⁰, recalling the cosmological metaphors from the Prologue (1,4-5). Usually, individuals can see in the daytime and cannot see at night. John (as a *Chiffre* for the author of the words I am referring to, or of the Gospel itself as a text ¹¹; according to John 20,24, the

⁷ Cf. E.C. HOSKYNs, “Genesis I–III and St. John’s Gospel”, *JThS* (1920) 210-218, here 216.

⁸ Cf. B. LINDARS, *The Gospel of John* (NCBC; London 1972) 343.

⁹ Cf. R. ZIMMERMANN, “Neuschöpfung: Die Koinzidenz von Anfang und Ende im frühen Christentum, besonders im Johannesevangelium”, *Anfang & Ende. Vormoderne Szenarien von Weltentstehung und Weltuntergang* (eds. M. GINDHART – T. POMMERENING) (Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie. Sonderbände der Antiken Welt; Darmstadt 2016) 85-138, here 102.

¹⁰ Cf. R. ZIMMERMANN, “Im sterblichen Fleisch ist ewiges Leben: Ein Beitrag zur Schöpfungstheologie des Johannesevangeliums”, *Natur und Schöpfung* (eds. G. THOMAS – B. JANOWSKI) (JBTh 34; Göttingen 2020) 111-136, here 121.

¹¹ Cf. M.M. THOMPSON, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI 2001) 10 n. 27.

author was a disciple, but we do not know his name nor if the whole Gospel [1,1 – 21,25] was written by only one person) uses Jesus' exemplary giving of light to this blind man to make the more general point: ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν “that those who do not see may see” (9,39). The focus of the interrogators regarding the question about breaking the Sabbath blinds them — despite having physical eyesight — to what is extraordinary, namely that a blind person can now see. Thereby light and (quality of) life are understood according to John 1,4 and 8,12 as belonging together. The gift of light is connected with the gift of (new) life, which leads to the next motif.

b. Birth

Even though the lexeme γενετή (“birth”) is a *hapax legomenon* in the NT (John 9,1), the motif occurs earlier in the Prologue (1,13), using the verb γεννᾶω (“to beget/to be born”). Being born of blood means being of the earth (ἐκ τῆς γῆς, 3,31).

Γεννᾶω also occurs in 3,3-8. To *see* the kingdom, one must be reborn (3,3). So (re-)birth and seeing are connected (9,37). This train of thought can be supported by the observation that the blind man should wash with water. This is a baptismal motif, strengthening the parallels between ch. 9 and ch. 3. The person not only received his physical sight but is recreated as a whole new person, seeing Jesus as his light and no longer living in darkness.

There is another aspect, that must not be neglected: like the healing at Bethzatha, the healing in John 9 is performed on the Sabbath.

c. Sabbath

In John 5, Jesus is accused of making himself equal to God because he heals on the Sabbath. The logic of this argument is as follows: since only God is allowed to work on the Sabbath¹², if humans work on the Sabbath, they make themselves equal to God, which is usually blasphemous (one important exception is circumcision; cf. 7,19-24). In v. 17, the Johannine Jesus feels paradoxically understood by his opponents and emphasizes that the Father as Creator is constantly working and so is he. The Sabbath in ch. 9 (vv. 14, 16) is distinct because the healing is something that, according to v. 32, has never occurred since the creation: “Never since the world began [ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος] has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind” (v. 32). It is noteworthy that in the NRSV version, the healed man initially addresses Jesus as “sir”, while the second

¹² Cf. ZIMMERMANN – SHOUKRY, “*Creatio Continua* in the Fourth Gospel”, 97-99.

time, after realizing who Jesus really is, the man calls him “Lord” (9,36.38: in both instances, the Greek term is κύριος). Is the formerly blind man acknowledging Jesus’ power as healer and Creator? Freidrich V. Reiterer shows in his assessment of the designations for God as Creator that κύριος is used most frequently, at least in his examples from the deuterocanonical literature ¹³. God as Creator is, of course, frequently referred to as *Kyrios* in the protocanonical writings of the LXX as well; cf. Gen 2,8.15.16.19.22, to name only the passages from Genesis 2. This does not mean, obviously, that *Kyrios* in John 4,49 must have these connotations. But the question is whether they can be ruled out, especially in light of the other arguments in favor of a creation-theological reading.

After this brief examination of John 9 in light of other Johannine creation motifs (light, birth, Sabbath), we turn to possible traditional sources that might serve as the background for John 9,6. First, we take a look at the Septuagint, because it was widely received at the time the Gospel was written. Afterward, we turn to the Dead Sea Scrolls and other texts.

2. Septuagint

Scholars debate whether John 9,6 refers to Gen 2,7. There are six ways to address the question: (1) yes, there is a connection between John 9,6 and Gen 2,7 ¹⁴; (2) no, there is no connection between these verses ¹⁵; (3) some point out that others see a connection without making their own opinion explicit ¹⁶; (4) some think it is unlikely ¹⁷, while (5) others think it is probable ¹⁸; (6) some simply do not discuss this question ¹⁹.

Even though there are no literal matches of significant words in Gen 2,7 and John 9,6, the content is similar:

¹³ Cf. F.V. REITERER, “Dimensionen der Schöpfung in der deuterokanonischen Literatur”, *Sacra Scripta* 7 (2009) 169-198, here 172-173.

¹⁴ Cf. J.R. MICHAELS, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2010) 545-546; D.A. LEE, *Flesh and Glory*. Symbol, Gender, and Theology in the Gospel of John (New York 2002) 38.

¹⁵ Cf. C.R. SOSA SILIEZAR, *Creation Imagery in the Gospel of John* (LNTS 546; London 2015) 113.

¹⁶ Cf. R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, 2 vols. (AB 29/29A; Garden City, NY 1966) 1:372; R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium*. Zweiter Teil. Kommentar zu Kapitel 5–12. Sonderausgabe 2000 (HThKNT; Darmstadt 2014) 307-308 n. 3.

¹⁷ Cf. C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel according to St. John*. An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text (London ²1982) 358.

¹⁸ Cf. J. ZUMSTEIN, *Das Johannesevangelium* (KEK 2; Göttingen 2016) 364; C.S. KEENER, *The Gospel of John*. A Commentary, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI 2003) 780; H. THYEN, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen ²2015) 457.

¹⁹ Cf. R. BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (KEK; Göttingen ²¹1986) 252.

- In both cases, there is a divine subject (God/Jesus).
- In both cases, something is made (πλάσσω — “to form” in Gen 2,7; ποιέω — “to do” in John 9,6.11.14). Both verbs are used synonymously (cf. the parallelisms of the LXX, e.g., in Job 10,8; Pss 73,17^{LXX}; 94,5^{LXX}; 118,73^{LXX}; Isa 27,11; 29,16; 40,2; 43,1.7; 44,2; apart from these, cf. Rom 9,20).
- In both cases, something comes out of the mouth (pneuma/saliva) which changes the situation drastically (from lifeless to living, from blind to seeing).

The similarities of both texts were seen in the early church (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.15.2; Theodore of Heraclea, frag. 72; Ammonius of Alexandria, frag. 317; Photios, frag. 63²⁰; Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentary on the Diatessaron* 16.28²¹). Irenaeus, for example, develops the argument that “works” (τὰ ἔργα) is the designation for the things the Creator is doing, and Jesus frames his actions with the same words: there are works (τὰ ἔργα) to do (9,3-4). However, this does not necessarily mean that there is an intentional allusion. But it is worth noting that interpreters have seen a connection between Gen 2,7 and John 9,6, starting in the early church and continuing until the present day, most notably in the studies of Christiane Koch and Daniel Frayer-Griggs²². Moreover, John 20,22 most likely indicates that John was familiar with Gen 2,7, since he is using the exact same verb to describe the giving of the spirit (ἐμφυσάω).

Job also calls himself “the work of your hands” (ἔργον χειρῶν σου, Job 10,3), addressing God as the one who made him (ποιέω, 10,8) like “clay” (πηλός, 10,9). Thus, we have two creation motifs in the same passage, namely works and clay, in combination with a verb that can express acts of creation (ποιέω).

Using ποιέω as a verb to describe creational activity is not uncommon. In creation contexts (e.g., Gen 1,1; 2,4.18; Exod 20,11; Prov 14,31; Wis 9,9; Jdt 8,14) ποιέω (“doing/making/creating”) is often used²³. God

²⁰ Cf. J. REUSS, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (TU 89; Berlin 1966) 85, 276, 387-388.

²¹ Cf. SOSA SILIEZAR, *Creation Imagery*, 117.

²² Cf. C. KOCH, “Geschaffen, um Gott zu sehen: Die Heilung des Blindgeborenen als ‘Schöpfungsereignis’ in Joh 9, 1-38”, *Horizonte biblischer Texte*. Festschrift für Josef M. Oesch zum 60. Geburtstag (ed. A. VONACH) (OBO 196; Fribourg 2003) 195-222; D. FRAYER-GRIGGS, “Spittle, Clay, and Creation in John 9:6 and Some Dead Sea Scrolls”, *JBL* 132 (2013) 659-670.

²³ Cf. H. BRAUN, “ποιέω, ποίημα, ποίησις, ποιητής”, *TWNT* 6:456-483; B. SCHMITZ, “‘Dir soll Deine ganze Schöpfung dienen’ (Jdt 16,14): Schöpfungstheologie im Buch Judit”, *Theologies of Creation in Early Judaism and Ancient Christianity*. Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies (eds. T. NICKLAS – K. ZAMFIR) (DCLS 6; Berlin 2010) 51-59, here 51.

is called the one who made/created, using the same lexeme (ὁ ποιήσας, “the Creator”, cf. Sir 4,6; 7,30; 10,12; 32,13; 47,8; Bar 3,35; 4,7). The fact that John 9,6 has the same verb is another argument for the thesis that an act of creation is described in this passage.

“The work of your hand” is identified in Isa 64,7 as “clay” (πηλός / ההמר, respectively Isa 64,8 according to the numbering of NRSV). The Masoretic text expresses the relation between the Creator and humankind by using the metaphor of a potter, who makes and forms the clay. This metaphor appears in various passages, stressing the dependence of humans on God (cf. Sir 33,13; Isa 29,16; 45,9; Wis 15,7-10; Rom 9,21²⁴; *T. Naph.* 2.2; Jer 18,6). Isa 64,7 shares with John 9 (esp. vv. 3-4, 6, 11, 14-15) the words “clay/mud” (πηλός, for an extrabiblical example of the same idea without using the exact same Greek word, see *Sib. Or.* 8.445-446 [χοικῶ πλασθέντι]) and “work(s)” (ἔργον/ἔργα).

The assertion in John 9,32 that something like this never happened before does not refer to this sort of healing in general. In Tob 11,11-13, a similar cure from blindness occurs by applying a substance to the eyes. Moreover, it was not unheard of to recover from blindness in antiquity (see, e.g., Petronius, *The Satyricon* 131.4; Theocritus, *Idylls* 6.39-40; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 28.7.37; Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.81)²⁵. The new thing about the healing in John 9 is that someone is cured who was born blind. Additionally, the way in which the story is narrated and the specific details in John 9, such as forming the mud and portraying the action as performing works²⁶, support the idea that this healing is narrated as an act of (re-)creation.

Having examined how these concepts relate with creation in the Septuagint, we now look at the Dead Sea Scrolls and other texts, which provide insight into contemporary theological concepts which might have been influential in the time of the Fourth Gospel. It is not about literary dependency in a strict sense, which is always hard to prove. I agree with Brooke, who argues “for some Qumranic influence in the Gospel” without subscribing “to wholehearted theories of direct Essene influence or authorship”. His suggestion “allows us to account for the differences between John and the scrolls while also stressing the similarities”²⁷.

²⁴ Cf. K.H. RENGSTORF, “πηλός”, *TWNT* 6:118-119, here 118.

²⁵ For these and further examples, see *Neuer Wettstein. Texte zum Johannesevangelium* (eds. U. SCHNELLE – M. LABAHN – M. LANG) (Berlin 2001) 489-495.

²⁶ Cf. M. RAE, “The Testimony of Works in the Christology of John’s Gospel”, *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*. First St. Andrews Conference on Scripture and Theology (eds. R. BAUCKHAM – C. MOSSER) (Grand Rapids, MI 2008) 295-310.

²⁷ G.J. BROOKE, “Luke, John, and the Dead Sea Scrolls”, *John, Qumran, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Sixty Years of Discovery and Debate* (eds. M.L. COLOE – T. THATCHER) (SBLEJL 32; Atlanta, GA 2011) 69-91, here 91.

3. *Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Texts*1QS XI 21-22²⁸

וילוד אשה מהישב לפניכה והואה מעפר
מגבלו ולחם רמה סדורו והואה מצור רק
חמר קורץ ולעפר תשוקתו מה ישיב חמר
ויוצר יד ולעצת מה יבין

1QS XI 21-22

“As what shall one born of woman be considered in your presence? Shaped from dust [מעפר] he has been, maggots’ food shall be his dwelling; he is spat saliva [מצורוק], 22 moulded clay, and for dust is his longing. What will the clay reply and the one shaped by hand? And what advice will he be able to understand?”²⁹

While Gen 2,7 and other passages (e.g., 4 Ezra 16,61, adopting Gen 2,7) do not specify how exactly God forms people from earth, here in 1QS XI 21-22 the formation of the dust is described as *מצורוק* “spat saliva”, which is specified as “molded clay” (other possible reconstructions of the word are *מצור*³⁰ / *מצורוק*³¹ / *מצירוק*³² / *מצידוק*³³). Similar to 1QS XI 21-22, also 1QH 20,35 / XX 32³⁴ expresses the lowliness of human creatures in relation to God or their futility in general by using the same word (*מצורוק*). Despite this unworthiness in principle, God pours out his spirit (1QH 23,29 / XXIII 9) on this lump of saliva (1QH 23,28.36 / XXIII bottom 8,16) and gives it knowledge (4QShirShabb^b 28+29,3).

In the Hodayot 1QH, the phrases *יצר חמר* / *יצר חמר* (“formations of clay”) and *יצר עפר* / *יצר העפר* (“formations of dust”) are almost standard names for the created human being. They occur often (cf. also *מעפר* “of/from dust”, 1QH 3,23) and already have biblical models: *כִּי־הוּא יָדַע יִצְרָנוּ* “For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust” (Ps 103,14).

If we look at the contexts of the above passages from the Hodayot, it becomes clear that the praying person, with her/his self-designation as a

²⁸ M. BURROWS, ed., *Plates and Transcriptions of the Manual of Discipline* (New Haven, CT 1951) XI.

²⁹ F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – E.J.C. TIGCHELAAR, eds., *1Q1 – 4Q273* (Leiden 1999) 99.

³⁰ BURROWS, *Plates and Transcriptions*, XI.

³¹ H. STEGEMANN – E. SCHULLER – C. NEWSOM, eds., *1QHodayot^a*. With Incorporation of 1QHodayot^b and 4QHodayot^{a-f} (DJD XL; Oxford 2009) 258-259.

³² GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 98.

³³ STEGEMANN – SCHULLER – NEWSOM, *1QHodayot*, 258.

³⁴ Because there are different ways of counting, I use the Arabic numerals to refer to the system of Dahmen and Roman numerals refer to the system of the DSSSE. Cf. U. DAHMEN, ed., *Die Loblieder (Hodayot) aus Qumran*. Hebräisch mit masoretischer Punktation und deutscher Übersetzung, Einführung und Anmerkungen (Stuttgart 2019); GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*.

formation of clay or dust, expresses the transitoriness of life and the lowliness of the creature in relation to the Creator. Nevertheless, God gives insight by opening the ear (9,23 / IX 21) and also the mouth (20,36 / XX 33); without the opening of the mouth by God the praying person would not know what he/she should say in a meaningful way. And he/she asks himself/herself: “How can I have insight without you opening my eyes?” (21,5 / XXI top 4). The creature should make miracles great (12,30 / XII 29, at least in the interpretation of Dahmen’s translation: “Was vermag ein Gebilde von Lehm, Wunder groß zu machen?”³⁵), which the praying person also accomplishes in the form of praise (19,6 / XIX 3). Similarly, the man born blind testifies to the wonder that Jesus has done for him, not only opening his physical eyes but also his spiritual eyes. To acknowledge God as the Creator and the one who opens the eyes leads to testifying to his works, in the Hodayot as well as in John 9.

In addition, the verb עשה (“to make/create” [*qal*] or “to be done/created” [*niphal*]) is used for the act of creation. עשה (“to make/create”) is of interest because ποιέω (“to make/create”) is often its equivalent, and ποιέω is also the verb in John 9,6. 1QH 21,7 / XXI 6 says for instance in reference to a miracle curing blindness: ואדעה כיא לכה עשיתה אלה אלי “And I have recognized that you have done these things [= the miracles] for you, my God”.

In summary, the Dead Sea Scrolls show that the idea of man as spat saliva is connected to the creation of humans³⁶. The Hebrew verb עשה used to describe this action is one of the typical verbs that describe acts of creation. In light of these sources, the action of Jesus could be understood as an act of (re-)creation because John 9 uses common creation motifs (spitting, forming the mud, and making something new). Furthermore, the reaction of the healed man is similar to the praying person of the Hodayot who acknowledges God as Creator, opening the eyes.

I want to mention only briefly that the creation of human beings as a mixture of water and earth is not only Jewish or Christian but is found also in other ancient texts, e.g. in Apollodorus’s *Library* (1,7,1):

Προμηθεὺς δὲ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ γῆς
ἀνθρώπους πλάσας.

“Prometheus moulded men out of water
and earth”³⁷.

³⁵ DAHMEN, *Die Loblieder (Hodayot)*, 49. Important English translations prefer slightly different readings (GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 171), such as: “And what creature of clay is able to do wondrous great deeds” (STEGEMANN – SCHULLER – NEWSOM, *1QHodayot*, 166).

³⁶ Cf. FRAYER-GRIGGS, “Spittle, Clay, and Creation”, 659-670.

³⁷ Apollodorus, *The Library* (trans. J.G. FRAZER) (LCL 121; Cambridge, MA 1921) 51.

And Zeus says to Epictetus (*Diatr.* 1,1.11): τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν σόν, ἀλλὰ πηλὸς κομψῶς πεφυραμένος “This body is not thine own, but only clay cunningly compounded”³⁸.

III. CONCLUSION

For the sake of clarity, I would like to compile in the following table important passages for the tradition-historical investigation arranged according to the various motifs.

<i>Tradition-historical analysis of John 9,6</i>	<i>Exemplary list of relevant passages</i>
in general	Gen 2,7; 1QH 21,5 / XXI top 4; 4 Ezra 16,61; Apollodorus, <i>Library</i> 1.7.1
the works-motif — ἔργα	Job 10,3; Isa 64,7
the mud-motif — πηλός	Job 10,9; Isa 29,16; 45,9; 64,7; Jer 18,6; Wis 15,7-10; Sir 33,13; 1QS XI 21-22 // 4QS ⁱ 9; 1QH 9,23 / IX 21; 11,24-25 / XI 23-24; 12,30 / XII 29; 19,6 / XIX 3; 20,35 / XX 32; 21:11-12.17.19-20.25.31 / XXI top 10 – 11,16. bottom 5.11; 23,28.36 / XXIII bottom 8.16; 4QD ^a 1a-b,23; 4QShirShabb ^b 28+29,3; <i>T. Naph.</i> 2,2; <i>Sib. Or.</i> 8,445-446; Petronius, <i>The Satyricon</i> 131,4; Epictetus, <i>Diatr.</i> 1.1.11
the creative act motif — ποιέω	Gen 1,1; 2,4.18; Exod 20,11; Job 10,8; Prov 14,31; Jdt 8,14; Wis 9,9; Sir 4,6; 7,30; 10,12; 32,13; 47,8; Bar 3,35; 4,7
the motif of healing the eyes through applying some substances	Tob 11,11-13; Petronius, <i>The Satyricon</i> 131,4; Theocritus, <i>Idylls</i> 6.39-40; Pliny the Elder, <i>Nat.</i> 28.7.37; Tacitus, <i>Hist.</i> 4.81

This article addresses the question of whether the healing of the man born blind in John 9 can be interpreted within the frame of creation theology. We cannot make assumptions about whether creation-theological references are intended by the author. It is merely a matter of asking if

³⁸ Epictetus, *The Discourses as Reported by Arrian. The Manual and Fragments*, 2 vols. (trans. W.A. OLDATHER) (LCL 131; Cambridge, MA 1925) 1:11.

a theological reading of creation is plausible. In my article, I have presented three arguments supporting a creation-theological reading of John 9, especially v. 6:

1. The motifs within the context of the whole chapter draw attention to the theme of creation: blindness/seeing the light (9,1.5), birth (v. 1), the contrast between day and night (9,4), the Sabbath (vv. 14, 16), the reference to the beginning of the world (v. 32), the “works” (ἔργα, vv. 3-4) and the *Kyrios*-address (vv. 36, 38). It has been made evident through my analysis that all of these motifs have creation-theological connotations. Moreover, the concept of formed mud as an expression of created man can be understood within the framework of Johannine anthropology, according to which man is from the earth (3,31).
2. The action of Jesus in John 9,6 is similar to the action of the Creator in the beginning when he created humans (Gen 2,7). In both cases, something comes out of the mouth (pneuma/saliva) which changes the situation drastically (from lifeless to living, from blind to seeing). In the Dead Sea Scrolls, humans are also described as a lump of spat saliva, which highlights their creatureliness (especially 1QH). The appropriate reaction of humans is to praise the works of their Creator, which the healed man did in John 9. Moreover, the notion of human beings as a mixture (πλάσσω and πηλός) of water and earth (ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ γῆς) is also attested in other ancient texts (e.g., Apollodorus, *Library* 1.7.1; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1,1,11).
3. “Mud” (πηλός) (9:6) is present in creation-theological contexts (e.g., Isa 29,16; Wis 15,7-10) and the verb ποιέω (“to do”, 9,6) is part of creation terminology as well (e.g., Jdt 8,14; Bar 3,35).

I do not think that any single one of these arguments is convincing on its own. The verb ποιέω as well as the noun ἔργον, to give just two examples, are too common. However, the combination of all these arguments lends merit to my thesis. Not only ποιέω and ἔργα but also the creation motifs of light, day/night, birth, Sabbath, spitting, formed clay and the *Kyrios*-address indicate that this view is tenable. Additionally, John 9,6 shares close parallels and overlapping traditions with Gen 2,7. In conclusion, the act of Jesus in John 9 might be read as an imitation of the Creator’s act: it is not only a healing but also the creation of a whole new man. Thus, the portrayal of Jesus may be taken to imply that he is depicted as the Creator.

SUMMARY

This article addresses the question of whether the healing of the man born blind in John 9 can be interpreted within the frame of creation theology. Of particular interest are the following motifs and words: blindness/seeing the light (9,1.5), birth (9,1), the contrast between day and night (9,4), the Sabbath (9,14.16), the reference to the beginning of the world (9,32), the “works” (ἔργα, 9,3-4), the *Kyrios*-address (9,36.38) and, most importantly, the mud (9,6). The tradition-historical analysis indicates that these motifs, as well as Jesus’ actions (spitting, making, forming), can be interpreted as creational activity.

THE APOCRYPHAL BACKDROP TO ROM 8,19-22

Modern biblical commentators often suppose that Rom 8,19-22 teaches a cosmic fall, i.e. that the natural world was immediately and intrinsically disordered by the sin of Adam. This is what is meant, they say, by creation being “subjected to futility”, in “bondage to corruption”, and “groaning together in the pains of childbirth” (ESV). Now, because the diction of Rom 8,19-22 is extremely compressed, many exegetes feel obliged to proffer external evidence that Paul indeed had a cosmic fall in view. One approach is to claim that Rom 8,19-22 alludes to the curse of the ground in Gen 3,17-18, the OT passage which is itself often associated with the fall of nature. Since modern Christians are typically quite accustomed to linking the two passages, there is little felt need to justify the connection ¹. However, since on literary grounds the allusion is not at all obvious, some commentators adopt a second approach, suggesting that a cosmic-fall interpretation of Rom 8,19-22 is supported by Jewish apocalyptic writings. While some commentators leave this suggestion implicit ², others have claimed quite directly that in Rom 8,19-22 Paul sanctioned the apocalyptic traditions which identified a cosmic fall with the curse of Gen 3,17-18 ³.

¹ E.g., W. SANDAY – A.C. HEADLAM, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh 1902) 207; J. MURRAY, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1968) 303; C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 (London 1975) 413; J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York 1993) 506-507; R. JEWETT, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN 2006) 513; B. BYRNE, *Romans* (Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville, MN 2006) 256-257; C.G. KRUSE, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI 2012) 343; D.J. MOO, *The Letter to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2018) 537. Moo's treatment is typical: after citing Murray and Cranfield (who themselves provided no evidence), he writes, “Gen. 3 is obviously behind Paul's reference here” (537). J. Moo (his son) provides some reasoning, albeit with much apprehension: “An echo of Genesis 3 in Romans 8 is suggested not only by the links with Romans 5 but also by Paul's use of the aorist ὑπετάγη, the tense possibly implying — in this context of present suffering, groaning, and expectant waiting for future freedom — a particular past event in which creation was put under subjection. The divine curses of Genesis 3 [...] also suggest themselves to some interpreters as possible explanations of what Paul means by this subjection”: J. MOO, “Romans 8.19-22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant”, *NTS* 54 (2008) 74-89, here 78 (emphasis added).

² E.g., SANDAY, *Romans*, 207-208; E. KÄSEMANN, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI 1980) 223; MOO, *Romans*, 536-537.

³ E.g., H.A. HAHNE, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*. Nature in Romans 8:19-22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature (London 2006) 226; MOO, “Romans 8.19-22”, 78-79.

I find the first approach rather unsatisfactory, not only because the OT, prescinding from Gen 3,17-18, frequently insists that lower creation retains its original integrity ⁴, but also because the argument seems to involve a vicious exegetical circle, reading Rom 8,19-22 as if Gen 3,17-18 clearly teaches a cosmic fall, and then vice versa. I will explore this line of thought more completely, however, on another occasion. In this article, I wish to challenge only the second approach by demonstrating that the Jewish apocalyptic literature does not support a cosmic-fall reading of Rom 8,19-22, but, if anything, supports the contrary.

Thanks to the detailed analysis of Harry Alan Hahne, we know that there are only a handful of Jewish apocalyptic writings which could possibly be deemed relevant in this connection ⁵. While several apocalypses suppose that the natural world was damaged by the sins of the Watchers (e.g., “the sons of God”; see Gen 6,1-4), there are only four extant books which suggest (or could be thought to suggest) that Adam himself occasioned a disorder in nature. These are, in roughly chronological order, the *Book of Jubilees*, 4 *Ezra* (i.e., 2 *Esdras*), 2 *Baruch*, and the *Apocalypse of Moses* (i.e., the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*). I shall comment on each in turn before making some general remarks.

It is generally agreed that the *Book of Jubilees* was composed by a Palestinian Jew in the middle of the second century BC ⁶. *Jubilees* contains only a few passing references to the effects of the Fall on lower creation. After Adam’s Fall, it is supposed that the animals lost their primordial power of speech and that they were then dismissed from Paradise and dispersed across the earth ⁷. Apparently the animals remained vegetarian, however, until the age of the Nephilim (Gen 6,4). At that time, “lawlessness increased on the earth and all flesh corrupted its way”, for “men and cattle and beasts and birds and everything that walks on the earth — all of them corrupted their ways and their orders, and *they began to devour each other*” ⁸. How the beasts had survived before devouring each other is, unfortunately, not specified. And, besides a couple of unilluminating references to “the guilt of the earth” ⁹, *Jubilees* has nothing more to say about a cosmic fall.

⁴ E.g., Neh 9,6; Bar 6,60-63; Pss 104,27; 150,6; Wis 8,1; 11,20; Sir 16,26-30; 39,16-34; 42,23.

⁵ HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 153-159.

⁶ HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 68.

⁷ *Book of Jubilees* 3.27-29. Perhaps it also caused the luminaries to lose their refulgence (1.29).

⁸ *Book of Jubilees* 5.2 (translation from R.H. CHARLES, *Pseudepigrapha*. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English [Oxford 1913] 20; emphasis added).

⁹ *Book of Jubilees* 6.2; cf. 4.26.

The remaining three apocryphal writings of interest were written much later than *Jubilees*, and, as such, Paul was less likely to have read them, and even less likely to have considered them authoritative. Nevertheless, they put forward a theology which was possibly current (although not necessarily popular) in Paul's time.

The original, pre-Christian core of *4 Ezra* (chs. 3–14) was probably written in Palestine around 100 AD ¹⁰. Although this work is less transparent than *Jubilees* about the ecological ramifications of the Fall, it contains the apocalyptic passage most frequently invoked by commentators on Rom 8,19-22 ¹¹:

I made the world for [humanity's] sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made [i.e., the world] was judged. And so the entrances of this world were made narrow and sorrowful and toilsome; they are few and evil, full of dangers and involved in great hardships. But the entrances of the greater world are broad and safe, and really yield the fruit of immortality. Therefore unless the living pass through the difficult and vain experiences, they can never receive those things that have been reserved for them ¹².

The "entrances of this world" are the pathways of the righteous, the "difficult and vain experiences" which lead to immortality ¹³. Because of Adam's sin, says *4 Ezra*, life for man has become full of hardships. But we may ask: Did lower creation need to change intrinsically in order to bring about such hardships? On that question the passage is very unclear, and there is little else within *4 Ezra* that might demystify it ¹⁴. Indeed, although "Adam's sin plays a more prominent role in this book than in most other apocalyptic works, [...] nothing is said of a curse on nature" ¹⁵. On the other hand, several passages in *4 Ezra* speak of lower creation quite positively ¹⁶. Jonathon Moo, in his exegesis of Rom 8,19-22, is therefore

¹⁰ Hahne, *Corruption and Redemption*, 108-109.

¹¹ E.g., FITZMYER, *Romans*, 508; JEWETT, *Romans*, 514; MOO, *Romans*, 536-537, n. 1081; MOO, "Romans 8.19-22", 78-79; HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 113-114; BYRNE, *Romans*, 256; KRUSE, *Romans*, 343, 347; S.W. HAHN, *Romans* (CCSC; Grand Rapids, MI 2017) 139.

¹² *4 Ezra* 7.11-14 (RSV).

¹³ Cf. *4 Ezra* 4.7.

¹⁴ One might look to *4 Ezra* 5.55; 13.26, but such allusions are very tenuous. In Moo's opinion, *4 Ezra* 4.28-29 is "the nearest *4 Ezra* comes to describing cosmic 'evil'": J.A. MOO, *Creation, Nature and Hope in 4 Ezra* (Göttingen 2011) 95 (emphasis removed). Yet I find Moo's passage to be even less indicative of a cosmic fall than the others. *3 Ezra*, it should be noted, is completely silent on the matter.

¹⁵ D.E. GOWAN, "The Fall and Redemption of the Material World in Apocalyptic Literature", *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 7 (1985) 83-103, here 95.

¹⁶ E.g., "O call heaven and earth to witness, for I left out evil and created good, because I live, says the Lord" (*4 Ezra* 2.14; RSV); "Let the human race lament, but let the beasts of the field be glad [...] For it is much better with them than with us; for they do not look

quite unjustified in declaring that, according to *4 Ezra*, “all the painful, difficult, and dangerous ways of the present world are traced back directly to Adam”¹⁷. Rather, *4 Ezra* simply says that, because of sin, man’s path to paradise will be arduous. But that path can be made arduous without having to postulate any intrinsic changes to plants and animals, especially since the typical adversities experienced by man — which *4 Ezra* certainly has in mind — have little to do with plants and animals themselves¹⁸. At most we can say that the status of lower creation in *4 Ezra*, as Moo himself admits elsewhere, is “elusive”¹⁹.

The third apocryphal writing of note is *2 Baruch*, another late first-century work likely of Palestinian provenance²⁰. As for its protological import, I can be very brief. Although Hahne claims that *2 Baruch* teaches a cosmic fall, I think he is plainly incorrect²¹. At the very least, Hahne himself would have to concede that *2 Baruch* is even less clear than *4 Ezra* on this point.

The *Apocalypse of Moses*, on the other hand, unambiguously attributes natural evil to the sin of Adam. This mythological expansion of Genesis 1–4 is notoriously difficult to date, with estimates ranging from 100 BC to 600 AD²². Recent scholarship, however, seems to support Christian authorship and hence prefers to date the work between the second and fifth centuries²³. In an important passage, the *Apocalypse of Moses* blames the Fall of Adam for a deleterious change in the nature of animals:

for a judgment” (*4 Ezra* 7.65–66). Also note that the flesh-eating Leviathan was created before the Fall (*4 Ezra* 6.49–52). And perhaps thunderstorms existed prior to Paradise (*4 Ezra* 6.2). See also GOWAN, *Fall and Redemption*, 95–96.

¹⁷ MOO, “Romans 8.19–22”, 78 (emphasis original).

¹⁸ Even a drought, for example, would be an extrinsic change to lower creation, a change compatible with the unfallen view of lower creation. See note 34.

¹⁹ MOO, *4 Ezra*, 162.

²⁰ HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 127.

²¹ HAHNE (*Corruption and Redemption*, 129–130) cites several passages from *2 Baruch*, but only one verse could conceivably be regarded as attributing natural evil to Adam’s sin: “For [since] when he transgressed / Untimely death came into being, / Grief was named / And anguish was prepared, / And pain was created, / And trouble consummated, / And disease began to be established, / And Sheol kept demanding that it should be renewed in blood, / And the begetting of children was brought about, / And the passion of parents produced, / And the greatness of humanity was humiliated, / And goodness languished” (*2 Baruch* 56.6; translation from CHARLES, *Pseudepigrapha*, 513). It seems clear to me, however, that *2 Baruch* is here speaking strictly about the effects of the Fall on man: “death” refers to human death, and “disease” refers to human sickness (*2 Baruch* would have been unaware of pathogens). Here, as elsewhere, Hahne underestimates the anthropocentric milieu of the ancients.

²² HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 143–144, n. 198; M. DE JONGE – J. TROMP, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield 1997) 65–77.

²³ DE JONGE and TROMP (*Adam and Eve*, 65–77), on account of Christianity’s un-Jewish fascination with the figure of Adam, situate the *Apocalypse of Moses* between 100 and

Seth and Eve went into the regions of paradise. And as they were going along, Eve saw her son, and a wild beast fighting with him [...] Eve cried out to the wild beast, saying, "O you evil wild beast, will you not be afraid to fight with the image of God? How has your mouth been opened? How have your teeth been strengthened? How have you not been mindful of your subjection, that you were formerly subject to the image of God?" Then the wild beast cried out, saying, "O Eve, not against us your upbraiding nor your weeping, but against yourself, *since the beginning of the wild beasts was from you*. How was your mouth opened to eat of the tree about which God had commanded you not to eat of it? *For this reason also our nature has been changed*" ²⁴.

The *Apocalypse of Moses* says little more about the postlapsarian natural order ²⁵, but the just-quoted passage is sufficiently clear: the beasts themselves testify that their nature has been changed for the worse.

What are we to make of these four extra-biblical witnesses to a cosmic fall? The passages in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* are of little consequence, as I have noted, but the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Apocalypse of Moses* clearly show that the view of the fallen state of lower creation had at least some following in ancient Judeo-Christian culture. Of course, the doctrine appears only faintly in *Jubilees*, and, although it appears rather plainly in the *Apocalypse*, the latter may not have appeared until centuries after Paul's death.

More significantly, however, we must remember that the sin of Adam is not the only explanation of creation's corruption to be found in the Jewish apocalyptic literature. In fact, it is not even the *primary* such explanation. Donald Gowan, having surveyed *1 & 2 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and the *Sibylline Oracles*, concludes that, far from attributing natural evil to Adam, "more often the rebellion of *the sons of the gods* [i.e., the Watchers,] is said to bring a curse upon the material world" ²⁶. But even then, the curse induced by the Watchers is something that Gowan considers:

600 AD. Rivka Nir prefers a fourth- or fifth-century origin, which would correspond better to the history of Christian incense rites: R. NIR, "The Aromatic Fragrances of Paradise in the 'Greek Life of Adam and Eve' and the Christian Origin of the Composition", *NovT* 46 (2004) 20-45. Peter-Ben Smit counters, but without denying Christian authorship: P.-B. SMIT, "Incense Revisited: Reviewing the Evidence for Incense as a Clue to the Christian Provenance of the 'Greek Life of Adam and Eve'", *NovT* 46 (2004) 369-375.

²⁴ *Apocalypse of Moses* 10.1 – 11.2 (translation from A. WALKER, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 8 [Buffalo, NY 1886]; emphasis added and punctuation adjusted). Cf. *Apocalypse of Moses* 24.4.

²⁵ Except that the plants of Paradise lost their leaves (20.4), and perhaps that intemperate weather was inaugurated (24.3).

²⁶ GOWAN, *Fall and Redemption*, 100 (emphasis added).

to have been *already* dealt with by God in the Flood. Their confinement afterwards is regularly affirmed, and the renewed earth is also described [...] The transformation of nature in the last days is not said to be the lifting of a curse brought upon the world by human sin or the rebellion of the sons of gods, but is simply a part of God's rich, new blessings for the righteous, when his rule over the whole cosmos becomes manifest ²⁷.

In other words, insofar as the Jewish apocalyptic literature teaches a cosmic fall, its preferred mode of doing so is by way of the Watchers, and, what is more, that same literature generally regards the cosmic effects of that fall as having been abrogated at the Flood. If Paul, in Rom 8,19-22, was endorsing the Adamic cosmic fall on the authority of the Jewish apocalyptic literature, then he was not only endorsing a view which may have barely existed at the time of his writing (viz., in a few allusions found in the *Book of Jubilees*), but also a view which was not the preferred version of a cosmic fall. While it may be argued that Paul took the "minority opinion" for his own because it harmonized better with his theology, such an argument begs the original question. When exegetes declare that a cosmic fall theology embedded in Rom 8,19-22 appears more clearly through the lens of contemporaneous Jewish literature, we must reply that we only understand Paul *less* clearly through that lens, for if Paul meant to teach an Adamic cosmic fall in Rom 8,19-22, he was clearly running against the grain of apocalyptic protology.

Moreover, Paul would have been running against the grain to an even greater extent than I have let on so far. In point of fact, it is much easier to establish, by way of the Jewish apocalyptic literature, that the good-earth tradition of the Old Testament, which is manifestly opposed to cosmic fall theology ²⁸, remained in force during the intertestamental period. Despite the fact that Jewish apocalypses do at times speak of a cosmic fall (especially of the Watcher's variant), their *principal* motivation for discussing lower creation was to establish a "*contrast* with human rebelliousness and transitoriness" ²⁹. Gowan goes on to characterize the apocalyptic view of lower creation as follows:

The wonders of creation are enumerated with enthusiasm as revelations of God's glory and sovereignty. The regularity of the movements of the heavenly bodies and the procession of the seasons are cited as evidence of God's

²⁷ GOWAN, *Fall and Redemption*, 100 (emphasis added).

²⁸ At least prescinding from Gen 3,17-18. Again, since Christians typically interpret Gen 3,17-18 through a fallen-earth reading of Rom 8,19-22, I wish to leave Gen 3,17-18 out of the discussion, and that, of course, because I wish to challenge the evidence taken to support the fallen-earth reading of Rom 8,19-22. In my view, Gen 3,17-18 has little to do with nature itself, but much to do with man's relationship to nature. See also note 4.

²⁹ GOWAN, *Fall and Redemption*, 99 (emphasis added).

rule by law. As the obedient servants of God, the elements of nature are also used as agents of judgment ³⁰.

What Gowan says of the apocalyptic literature could just as well be said of the Old Testament. But a single quotation from *1 Enoch* will suffice to illustrate his conclusion: "I [Enoch] continued to bless the Lord of Glory who has wrought great and glorious wonders, to show the greatness of His work to the angels and to spirits and to men, *that they might praise His work and all His creation*" ³¹. The apocalyptic writings are littered with passages like these, which affirm, in dramatic style, the beauty and integrity of the natural world ³². Of course, from what has been said, it will be clear that Jewish apocalyptic literature did not put forward an altogether consistent protology. In *1 Enoch* alone one can find both the Watcher-sin theory of evil as well as its refutation ³³. The important point, however, is that among all these competing views the positive view of lower creation was the one which undoubtedly dominated ³⁴.

We may thus summarize our findings as follows. The Jewish apocalyptic writings advance at least three distinct positions on the postlapsarian state of lower creation. In the first and most common, lower creation is seen as retaining its essential integrity — notwithstanding degradations of an extrinsic kind, such as droughts — in concert with the prevailing

³⁰ GOWAN, *Fall and Redemption*, 99-100.

³¹ *1 Enoch* 36.4 (translation from CHARLES, *Pseudepigrapha*, 208; emphasis added). In full: "From thence I [Enoch] went to the south to the ends of the earth, and saw there three open portals of the heaven: and thence there come dew, rain, and wind. And from thence I went to the east to the ends of the heaven, and saw here the three eastern portals of heaven open and small portals above them. Through each of these small portals pass the stars of heaven and run their course to the west on the path which is shown to them. And as often as I saw I blessed always the Lord of Glory, and I continued to bless the Lord of Glory who has wrought great and glorious wonders, to show the greatness of His work to the angels and to spirits and to men, *that they might praise His work and all His creation: that they might see the work of His might and praise the great work of His hands and bless Him for ever*".

³² See HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 153-159.

³³ HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 103.

³⁴ As mentioned in note 21, I believe Hahne's underestimation of the ancients' anthropocentric bias causes him to overstate the degree to which the Jewish apocalypses denigrated (or even referred to) lower creation. The variance between my conclusion and his is compounded by the fact that, in my study, I am not interested in whether creation is corrupted in an extrinsic sense, but rather whether the Fall somehow introduced any intrinsic aberrations to the created order (i.e., changes to the nature of nature). When Hahne says, for example, that the "majority of Jewish apocalyptic writings [stress] that creation has been corrupted by sin" (HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 226), I agree only insofar as corruption is taken in an accidental sense. The Old Testament itself, while granting that lower creation was intrinsically unaffected by the Fall, certainly acknowledges that sin can and does defile "the land" (i.e., that sin may have extrinsic natural consequences, such as plagues and droughts).

theology of the Old Testament ³⁵. In the second position, a corruption of lower creation is said to be affected by the antediluvian sin of the Watchers, a sin whose cosmic effects, if any, were generally understood to have been totally reversed by the Flood. Finally, in the third and least common approach, Adam's sin is said to have caused an intrinsic vitiation of the natural world. This third approach appears vaguely in the *Book of Jubilees* during the mid-second century BC, not to clearly resurface again until the *Apocalypse of Moses*, which was composed perhaps a hundred years or more after Paul's death. Since Rom 8,19-22 contains no literal reference to the extant apocalyptic corpus ³⁶, its connection to that corpus is very tenuous, to say the least, if indeed Paul was promoting an Adam-incited cosmic fall. On the other hand, if Paul composed Rom 8,19-22 with every intention of upholding the view of lower creation found in the OT, he was writing with the weight of the apocalyptic tradition behind him, for the two mainline apocalyptic protologies, though differing in details, agree that the postdiluvian world retains its full, prelapsarian integrity. I have not altogether disproved the idea that Rom 8,19-22 taught an Adamic cosmic fall, but I have shown that the Jewish apocalyptic literature hardly supports, but more likely subverts such an exegesis.

Saint Paul Seminary
St. Paul, MN
USA

Matthew T. WARNEZ

SUMMARY

Modern exegetes often suppose that the creation themes found in Rom 8,19-22 were informed by ancient Jewish apocalyptic writings. More specifically, it has been suggested that Paul, following the apocalyptic tradition, believed Adam's sin to have precipitated a cosmic fall which left the natural world intrinsically vitiated. Upon a closer inspection of the sources, however, it seems that if Rom 8,19-22 depends on the Jewish apocalyptic literature at all, then it is less likely, not more, that Paul endorsed a cosmic fall.

³⁵ This category includes those instances where the apocalyptic books attribute creation's corruption to ongoing human sin, as opposed to a particular sin (of Adam, or of the Watchers). According to this view, Adam's sins have affected creation no more negatively than my own, i.e., they have affected creation only extrinsically.

³⁶ Rom 8,19-22 "is linked to Jewish apocalyptic literature not through direct literary borrowing, but in a shared theological outlook" (HAHNE, *Corruption and Redemption*, 226). Of course, insofar as Hahne considers the "shared theological outlook" to include a cosmic fall, I believe he is incorrect.

DISGUST IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY: THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ITS EARLY RECEPTION

For good or ill, disgust shapes the ways that humans think about morality and group identity, which psychologists and philosophers have documented in exploring the cognitive and emotional contours of politics and religion ¹. With the turn to emotions in the humanities more broadly, recent studies have focused on the mechanisms and depictions of disgust as a moral emotion in Mediterranean antiquity, including the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, with discussions of the latter focusing on the affective components of specific pericopes or verses (e.g., John 13 or Gal 3,28) ². In this essay I look more broadly at disgust in the New Testament and its early reception in order to identify patterns in ways of feeling in the first Christian centuries. Early Christians (or Christ followers) approached disgust as a moral emotion in divergent, even incommensurable, ways. I identify two primary modes of disgust talk in early Christian sources. One mode, found in a range of New Testament texts including the Gospels and Paul, rarely evokes the emotion of disgust in moral exhortation and narrative. While purity was an important component of the emerging Christian sense of community and theology, such authors conspicuously refrain from using the language of disgust or disgust-eliciting imagery, even in contexts where it would be expected. In a related way, an author

¹ P. ROZIN – J. HAIDT – C.R. MCCAULEY, “Disgust,” *Handbook of Emotions*, 4th ed. (eds. L.F. BARRETT – M. LEWIS – J.M. HAVILAND-JONES – U. FREVERT – P.N. JOHNSON-LAIRD) (New York 2017) 815-834; D. KELLY, *Yuck! The Nature and Moral Significance of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA 2011) 101-136; M. NUSSBAUM, *Hiding from Humanity. Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton, NJ 2004); W.I. MILLER, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA 1998); Z. YU – P. BALI – M. TSIKANDILAKIS – E.M.W. TONG, “‘Look Not at What Is Contrary to Propriety’: A Meta-Analytic Exploration of the Association between Religiosity and Sensitivity to Disgust”, *British Journal of Social Psychology* 60 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12479>.

² E.g., D. LATEINER – D. SPATHARAS (eds.), *The Ancient Emotion of Disgust* (Oxford 2016); L.J. CLAASENS, “From Fear’s Narcissism to Participatory Imagination: Disrupting Disgust and Overcoming the Fear of Israel’s *Hērem* Laws”, *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions. Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature* (ed. F.S. STREET) (Resources for Biblical Study 90; Atlanta, GA 2017) 77-96; T. KAZEN, “Disgust in Body, Mind, and Language. The Case of Impurity in the Hebrew Bible”, *Mixed Feelings*, 97-116; C. SHANTZ, “Emotion, Cognition, and Social Change. A Consideration of Galatians 3:28”, *Mind, Morality, and Magic. Cognitive Science Approaches in Biblical Studies* (eds. I. CZACHESZ – R. URO) (London 2014) 251-269; S.D. MOORE, “Retching on Rome: Vomitous Loathing and Visceral Disgust in Affect Theory and the Apocalypse of John”, *Biblical Interpretation* 22 (2014) 503-528.

may alternatively turn on its head the moral logic of disgust as indicative of sin, shame, and exclusion. Another mode of Christian disgust appears in other writings of the New Testament (Revelation, the Pastoral Epistles, Jude, and 2 Peter) and extrabiblical literature from the second century onward. Such Christian authors employ a rich vocabulary of disgust to draw theological and social boundaries between right-thinking Christians and other wrong-thinking or disturbing Christians. Right-thinking Christians are to view disturbers and heretics with disgust, as disgusting people, both for their teachings and their actions. The present discussion cannot claim comprehensiveness nor can it devote the same detail to individual passages that others have done in their more focused readings. Rather, by drawing on a wider range of New Testament and other early Christian texts, I identify common themes and trajectories in the early Christian attitudes toward disgust as a moral emotion, ways of disgust that would have long afterlives in emotional experiences of Christian communities and individuals.

I. ANCIENT DISGUST AND ITS IDENTIFICATION

While historians of antiquity have found disgust an attractive topic for some time, it poses some challenges compared to other ancient “emotions” or passions (πάθη), as the ancients termed a comparable concept³. Disgust never received the sort of sustained philosophical or theological reflection that other human emotions did in antiquity, like anger, love, envy, or joy⁴. While the modern study of emotions since Darwin has classified disgust among the common or core emotions, it was not considered a πάθος in the significant literature devoted to emotions among philosophers, whether in the school of Aristotle, the Stoics, or others. The reasons for this are debatable, but a likely explanation lies in the common

³ Disgust in Greco-Roman, biblical, and early Christian sources is approached respectively from a range of perspectives in LATEINER – SPATHARAS, *Ancient Emotion of Disgust*; T. KAZEN, *Emotions in Biblical Law. A Cognitive Science Approach* (Sheffield 2011); B. LEYERLE, “Refuse, Filth, and Excrement in the Homilies of John Chrysostom”, *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (2009) 337-356; S.A. HARVEY, *Scenting Salvation. Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Transformation of the Classical Tradition 42; Berkeley, CA 2006). The historical origins of the term “emotion” and the historiographical challenge of studying the history of emotions in ages where “passions” and “sentiments” were dominant concepts are explored by T. DIXON, *From Passions to Emotions. The Creation of a Secular Category* (Cambridge 2003). Despite, or perhaps because of such terminological and conceptual complexity, “emotion” has remained standard usage for ancient and medieval historians.

⁴ Such as studied through an Aristotelian lens by D. KONSTAN, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks. Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto 2006).

experience of disgust as an overwhelming and instinctive response, which fits poorly with ancient conceptualizations of emotion as cognitive and evaluative, and perhaps also with Aristotle's focus on the use of *pathē* in forensic rhetoric⁵. Nonetheless, ancient authors, especially non-philosophers — Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, pagan, Jewish and Christian — addressed and used the bodily and mental feelings of revulsion, distaste, and surfeit for a variety of purposes and with a variety of words: ἀηδής, βδέλυγμα, μαιίνω, μολύνω, σικχός, στυγερός (and their verbal and nominative forms). Yet, ancient theorists did not categorize such feelings into an abstract concept of disgust the way Stoics did for λύπη, φόβος, and so on. Examining passages from Plato and Plutarch that have been taken as intentionally disgusting by modern interpreters, historian R. Boddice has warned against conflating ancient feelings or emotions with modern assumptions about disgust *qua* emotion, when they might more accurately be understood as expressions of desire, fascination, or awe, for example⁶. Taking this into consideration, the following discussion clarifies what I mean by disgust with the hope of avoiding the anachronism Boddice describes, while also allowing for the comparability and intelligibility of early Christian and contemporary ways of feeling and thinking about disgust.

It is common among cognitive scientists to characterize emotions as “basic” or “secondary”. Among those who take this view of emotions, disgust certainly counts as basic, one of the purported six “basic” (or universal) emotions, and the emotion with the most consistent global facial expression⁷. Surprisingly, and noted even among those who understand disgust as a “visceral, reactive” basic emotion, disgust is the most specifically human of the core emotions: what we can identify as disgust is uniquely displayed by humans⁸. It is also a relatively late emotion to develop, between the ages of three and seven, and is furthermore entirely dependent on socialization or “enculturation”⁹. Without socialization,

⁵ D. LATEINER – D. SPATHARAS, “Introduction”, *Ancient Emotion of Disgust*, 1-42, here 6-7.

⁶ R. BODDICE, *A History of Feelings* (London 2019) 62-72.

⁷ The universal or basic emotions school is described by J. PLAMPER, *The History of Emotions. An Introduction* (Oxford 2015) 147-163. Significant critiques of the research program, in my view convincing, are in R. LEYS, *The Ascent of Affect. Genealogy and Critique* (Chicago, IL 2017) 76-128; and L.F. BARRETT, *How Emotions Are Made. The Secret Life of the Brain* (Boston, MA 2017) 42-55.

⁸ C. KORSMEYER, *Savoring Disgust. The Foul and the Fair in Aesthetics* (Oxford 2018) 34; also LATEINER – SPATHAROS, “Introduction”, 11, who compare it to laughter as a uniquely human response. BARRETT (*How Emotions Are Made*, 252-277) critiques the research on animal emotions.

⁹ P. ROZIN – J. HAIDT – C.R. MCCAULEY, “Disgust”, *Handbook of Emotions*, 3rd ed. (eds. M. LEWIS – J.M. HAVILAND-JONES – L.F. BARRETT) (New York 2008) 757-776, here 765.

disgust never develops ¹⁰. For those who approach emotions as concepts or “constructed”, neurologically, psychologically, and socially, and not as universal, basic, or innate faculties, disgust provides a valuable example of how socially and culturally contingent emotions are, even as automatic and visceral as they can feel ¹¹.

Students of disgust traditionally divide disgust elicitors into two categories: the materially disgusting and the morally disgusting ¹². Responses to such elicitors are sometimes distinguished as “core” disgust and “projective” disgust. Core disgust is the reaction to the material elicitors typical across human societies, such as bodily fluids, feces, swarming organisms, and body envelope violations ¹³. Projective disgust, on the other hand, refers to the common tendency to expand disgust language into morality and social relations. Classicists D. Lateiner and D. Spatharas describe the relationship well: the “term ‘projective disgust’ describes cases in which elicitors of ‘core’ disgust are projected upon individuals as means of stigmatizing and marginalizing them” ¹⁴. This “[m]oral’ disgust revolves around immaterial elicitors, such as morally ambivalent behavior, ideologies, or criminal actions” ¹⁵. Such cross-culturally common disgust elicitors — material and moral — are useful in identifying possible disgust when the disgust terms are not explicitly used ¹⁶. More significantly, along the lines of Boddice’s discussion of disgust, desire, and fascination in Plutarch’s remarks on animal sacrifice and Plato’s story of Leontius in the *Republic*, such elicitors may alert us to historical difference, to discover something else where we might today expect disgust ¹⁷.

As intuitive as such categories of core and projective or moral disgust may be — and I will continue to use them on occasion — they are no

¹⁰ ROZIN – HAIDT – MCCAULEY, “Disgust”, 3rd ed., 765.

¹¹ My understanding of emotion is influenced by the “constructed emotion” tradition in cognitive and brain science; this is presented for non-specialists by BARRETT, *How Emotions are Made*, and in numerous specialist publications; see, for example, L.F. BARRETT, “Emotions are Real”, *Emotion* 12 (2012) 413-448; IDEM, “Psychological Construction: The Darwinian Approach to the Science of Emotion”, *Emotion Review* 5 (2013) 379-389; and L.F. BARRETT – J.A. RUSSELL (eds.), *The Psychological Construction of Emotion* (New York 2014).

¹² KORSMEYER, *Savoring Disgust*, 36.

¹³ Common disgust elicitors are described in ROZIN – HAIDT – MCCAULEY, “Disgust”, 4th ed., 816-822; and for the Roman context see D. LATEINER, “Evoking Disgust in the Latin Novels of Petronius and Apuleius”, *Ancient Emotion of Disgust*, 203-234.

¹⁴ LATEINER – SPATHARAS, “Introduction”, 23.

¹⁵ LATEINER – SPATHARAS, “Introduction”, 23.

¹⁶ Historians of emotions emphasize attention to emotion words and metaphors (e.g., “love” and “sweetness”); methodological issues are discussed by B.H. ROSENWEIN, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY 2006).

¹⁷ BODDICE, *History of Feelings*, 62-72.

more than a useful heuristic. Cognitive science warns against a hard distinction between core and projective, or physiological and metaphorical disgust, as J.A. Russell claims that “no clear line separates the literal from the metaphorical use of the word *disgust*”¹⁸. The permeability of physiological and metaphorical disgust points to a crucial feature of disgust as an early Christian emotion. Disgust is a concept implicated in morality, sanctity, and purity, and thus also in establishing and maintaining social boundaries and hierarchies. As psychologist Paul Rozin puts it: “disgust is precisely the emotion that guards the sanctity of the soul as well as the purity of the body”¹⁹. The following sections identify divergent and competing ways that early Christians approached disgust, its use, and its suppression in the intersection of embodied feeling, metaphor, intergroup boundary-setting, and purity. I first look at the authentic letters of Paul and the New Testament Gospels, then turn to Revelation, the Pastoral Epistles, Jude, and 2 Peter, in dialogue with other early extra-biblical Christian sources. In conclusion I will touch on the reception of some New Testament traditions in late antique “apostolic memoirs”.

II. DISGUST AND ITS DISAPPEARANCE: PAUL AND THE GOSPELS

Given the central role of disgust and purity in the Jewish scriptures, it is striking that disgust language rarely occurs in the literature of the earliest Christ followers, the letters of Paul and the New Testament Gospels. It will be no surprise that when disgust words are used, it is primarily in discussions of the purity/impurity standards of biblical and post-biblical Judaism²⁰. Greek terms relating to disgust fall with the semantic domain of purity concerns in Jewish tradition (βδέλυγμα [and related forms]: disgusting or loathsome; μιαινῶ [and related forms]: to be stained with

¹⁸ J.A. RUSSELL, “The Greater Constructionist Project for Emotion”, *Psychological Construction*, 429-447, here 429. ROZIN – HAITT – MCCAULEY (“Disgust”, 4th ed., 822) also conclude: “In sum, there is continuing controversy, but emerging evidence indicates that moral disgust is not just a metaphor”. Cf. KAZEN, “Disgust in Body, Mind, and Language”, 105, on a related debate in Hebrew Bible studies: “When this linguistic data is taken seriously, we see that much of the literal-metaphorical debate [about purity] is misguided”.

¹⁹ Cited in KORSMEYER, *Savoring Disgust*, 34, and further in ROZIN – HAITT – MCCAULEY, “Disgust”, 4th ed., 820-822, while disgust in social conflict and boundary-setting is described at 826-827. Disgust’s activation as part of marking social hierarchy, targeted toward Roman society, is discussed by LATEINER – SPATHARAS, “Introduction”, 13.

²⁰ In two books on emotions in the New Testament, disgust plays no role. See M.A. ELLIOTT, *Faithful Feelings. Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI 2006), and S. VOORWINDE, *Jesus’ Emotions in the Gospels* (London 2011).

bodily fluids or filth; μολύνω: to be stained or defiled; and στυγερός [and related forms]: to be hated, abominated, or loathed)²¹. The Septuagint is replete with βδελ- terminology (to loathe or be disgusted at), and with μολύνω and μιαίνω terminology (to be stained or defiled, by some liquid or metaphorical contaminant)²². Yet this language of disgust is rare in the first generations of Christian literature. Paul uses disgust words sparingly, and even then in a projective or metaphorical sense²³. He refers to consciences as potentially defiled (1 Cor 8,7, μολύνεται), and calls on his Corinthian beloved to cleanse themselves from bodily and spiritual defilement (2 Cor 7,1: μολυσμοῦ). He once refers to his fellow Jews who “loathe” idols, a positive disgust at impurity which they evince hypocritically (Rom 2,22, βδελθόμενος). Paul uses language of moral purity and impurity in a number of contexts (Rom 1,24; 6,19; 14,20; 1 Cor 7,14; 2 Cor 6,17; 7,1; 12,21; Gal 5,19; 1 Thess 2,3; 4,7). While impurity and purity can be connected to feelings of disgust, not least in biblical sources, Paul draws on neither the lexicon of revulsion and distaste nor disgust-eliciting imagery in these passages.

Disgust words are furthermore almost entirely lacking from the Gospels, and what terms occur are projective, even as purity remains a theme in Jesus’ eschatological career²⁴. The Synoptics mention the coming desecration of the temple (Matt 24,15 = Mark 13,14: βδέλυγμα), and in Luke Jesus calls what is prized by human hearts an abomination to God (Luke 16,15: βδέλυγμα). Yet, the emotional terminology of disgust, visceral or metaphorical, core or projective, plays little role in the theological or narrative concerns of these first-century texts.

Of course, one need not use disgust words (abomination, staining, corruption, and so on) to indicate the feeling. In this light, more interesting than the use of simple disgust terms is the way that the Gospels and Paul address narrative situations where the elicitors of core or projective disgust are present (such as bodily fluids, feces, animals, body envelope violations,

²¹ I draw this list of terms partly from LATEINER – SPATHARAS, “Introduction”, 5, compared with E. HATCH – H.A. REDPATH, *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, 2 vols. (Oxford 1897). Ἀηδής, σικχός, and related words do not occur in the NT, nor does σικχός appear in the LXX. T. KAZEN, *Emotions in Biblical Law*, 71-94, discusses disgust as an emotional component of biblical purity laws. NT translations follow the NRSV with some exceptions.

²² Στυγέω terminology appears only in 3 Maccabees, but the other terms are common.

²³ The importance of metaphor in ancient Israelite and Jewish purity discourse is emphasized by J. KLAWANS, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*. Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism (New York 2006).

²⁴ See J. MAGNESS, “‘They Shall See the Glory of the Lord’ (Isa 35:2). Eschatological Perfection and Purity at Qumran and in Jesus’ Movement”, *JSHJ* 14 (2016) 99-119; and T. KAZEN, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*. Was Jesus Indifferent to Purity? (Stockholm 2002).

sexual matters, and disease). One such example is 1 Corinthians 5, where Paul addresses the situation of a member of the Corinthian congregation cohabiting with his stepmother, apparently without being roundly condemned by the others. This (perhaps borderline) incest is exactly where one would expect disgust language; incest is a prime elicitor of projective disgust cross-culturally, and certainly was so in Greco-Roman antiquity ²⁵. While Paul here embraces a rhetoric of purity in calling for the wrongdoer to be expelled, as from the social body, he does not betray any disgust on the level of emotion words or encourage his correspondents to feel it. Instead, he encourages sorrow: his congregation should “have mourned (ἐπενθήσατε)” so that the wrongdoer would have been cast out (1 Cor 5,2). The absence of disgust in the narrative context of incest is quite conspicuous.

Another area where disgust intersects with Paul’s teachings has been discussed by C. Shantz, who notes the possible cognitive and emotional subtext of Gal 3,28, especially Paul’s decree that “there is neither Jew nor Greek” ²⁶. Shantz compiles considerable ancient testimony of feelings of revulsion toward Jews and Greeks as outsiders and others, including disgust at diet, smells, alleged animality, and sexual norms ²⁷. It is entirely understandable that ancient Jews and Greeks could and did sometimes look upon the “other” with disgust, but it cannot have been universal, perhaps not even typical, given the apparent popularity of synagogue attendance by at least some Gentiles, not to mention the Galatian Christians’ own attraction to circumcision and other Jewish purity and dietary practices. It is striking that Paul does not evoke any disgust at this merging of Jewish and Greek identity in Gal 3,28 or elsewhere in the letter. Shantz argues that the emotional experience that Paul points to is one of awe ²⁸. Since Paul does not use explicit emotion words pointing to awe, e.g., expressions of wonder and fear, Shantz adduces other “religious experiences” in Paul’s letters as parallels indicative of the desired emotional experience of awe ²⁹. These parallels, along with those of cross-cultural and cognitive psychology, are suggestive and echo examples noted by Bodice (discussed previously) of ancient writers framing ostensibly disgusting narratives (to the modern reader) as awe-inspiring. Shantz presents this shift from disgust to awe as a collective cognitive and emotional experience

²⁵ The ancients regarded sex with a stepparent as incest, and it was explicitly banned in Roman and Jewish law: J.A. FITZMEYER, *First Corinthians* (AYB 32; New Haven, CT 2008) 233-234.

²⁶ SHANTZ, “Emotion, Cognition, and Social Change”.

²⁷ SHANTZ, “Emotion, Cognition, and Social Change”, 258-263.

²⁸ SHANTZ, “Emotion, Cognition, and Social Change”, 263-268.

²⁹ SHANTZ, “Emotion, Cognition, and Social Change”, 264-265.

that was a significant transformation in the early Christian movement, an important thesis that I will return to ³⁰.

The Synoptic Gospels also place readers in situations where they might expect disgust. Three times Jesus is faced with sufferers from λέπρα, a dermatological condition likely distinct from what is generally described as leprosy today (Hansen's disease) ³¹. Leprosy has often played a cultural role as disgusting and stigmatizing from antiquity until modernity, and thus in thinking about morality and social boundaries. Leprosy figures prominently in ancient Jewish discussion of purity and impurity, although the extent of social and spatial isolation that those with λέπρα would have experienced in the Second Temple period has recently been questioned ³². It is thus striking that there is nothing disgust-eliciting in the leprosy episodes. In two of them (Matt 8,1.4 = Mark 1,10 = Luke 5,12, and Matt 11,5 = Luke 7,22) Jesus touches the lepers to heal them. In the third (Luke 7,11-19) Jesus heals from afar. In none of these stories does any character evince disgust, and in none does the author include descriptive details that would be expected to evoke a disgust response in the reader. If one were not familiar with the disease of λέπρα and all its cultural baggage from Leviticus on, there would be nothing disgusting in these three passages.

What this signifies is an open question. If, as Shinall implies, Second Temple society was admirably inclusive of differently bodied people with leprosy, a feature occluded by centuries of antisemitism (and perhaps ableism), then the lack of disgust language and imagery would be still more evidence. Luke's lack of disgust, however, just as well supports a more traditional reading of Jesus' healing ministry as a critique of his contemporaries' attitudes toward impurity and purity and exclusionary practices toward the sick ³³.

³⁰ SHANTZ, "Emotion, Cognition, and Social Change", 269.

³¹ D.P. WRIGHT – R.N. JONES, "Leprosy", *ABD* 4.277-282, here 281; M. SHINALL, JR., "The Social Condition of Lepers in the Gospels", *JBL* 137 (2018) 915-934, here 916.

³² Shinall provides an extensive bibliography in his revisionist essay, which argues that the evidence that people with leprosy were stigmatized and socially isolated has been nearly universally misinterpreted by scholars, driven largely by (ancient) anti-Judaism and (modern) antisemitism, which he notes "is not meant as a personal criticism of any of the interpreters quoted or cited" ("Social Condition", 934). While a latent supersessionism in modern scholarly and confessional discussion of leprosy is important to mark, I am not convinced of his reading of ancient sources (such as Josephus and the Dead Sea Scrolls), which is governed by a hermeneutic of extreme suspicion. In the end, for all the essay's critical re-readings, Shinall's conclusion is hardly controversial: "Nor do I mean to imply that there was no social exclusion of lepers in Second Temple society. Although the evidence is fragmentary and often contradictory, some level of exclusion of the leprosy recurs throughout the sources" (934).

³³ See, for example, H. AVALOS, *Health Care and the Rise of Christianity* (Peabody, MA 1999) 66-71; or L. LAWRENCE, "Disease and Disability Metaphors in Gospel Worlds", *Interpretation* 73 (2019) 377-385, here 379-380.

The sole passage in the Synoptics to employ disgust-eliciting language is Luke's parable of the rich man and the pauper Lazarus, who lies at the city gate "covered with sores" (ἐλκωμένος) (Luke 16,20). This is undoubtedly meant to evoke disgust or revulsion, compounded by the description of dogs (considered filthy and disgusting in antiquity) licking his open wounds (Luke 16,21). The brief description of Lazarus's state incorporates most of the cross-culturally typical elicitors of disgust: unclean animals, the close contact or interpenetration of human and animal, body envelope violations, and consumption of bodily fluids. Yet, Lazarus is the hero, transformed from object of disgust and pity into one of desire and emulation. The pauper ascends to paradise at Abraham's side, while the rich man goes to Hades, where he wants nothing more than to have Lazarus touch his tongue with a drop of water (an unrequited desire that the rich man would have previously considered revolting). Luke uses this imagery of sores, pus, and dogs as emblematic of the apocalyptic reversal of fortune. Just as one should not trust in one's wealth, one should not trust one's feelings of disgust, feelings which, in ancient Rome as today, were commonly connected to a sense of superiority³⁴. Some contemporary philosophers, such as P. Devlin and L. Kass, have posited a kind of wisdom of disgust. To feel disgust at some action or phenomenon reliably indicates that it is indeed morally wrong³⁵. The Lukan parable vividly turns such moral logic on its head, as the rich man's instinctive response to Lazarus's state is proven utterly unreliable.

Disgust plays a minimal role as well in Johannine literature: it is absent from the letters and of little importance in the Fourth Gospel. This runs counter to at least one recent example of Johannine scholarship on emotions. In a 2017 essay, S. Moore asserts that the "Fourth Gospel [...] is structured by disgust, by its convulsive, heaving movements of revulsion, expulsion, and exclusion"³⁶. Yet, apart from one mention of the refusal of Jesus' captors to enter Pilate's headquarters in order to avoid ritual defilement (John 18,28, ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν), disgust — either marked by Greek words for such feelings or imagery of common disgust elicitors — occurs in only one episode, the burial and raising of Lazarus.

³⁴ For which, in the Roman context, see R.A. KASTER, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford 2005) 108-133; and LATEINER – SPATHARAS, "Introduction", 13.

³⁵ NUSSBAUM, *From Disgust to Humanity*, 8-13; KELLY, *Yuck!*, 138-140.

³⁶ S.D. MOORE, "Why the Johannine Jesus Weeps at the Tomb of Lazarus", *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions. Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature* (ed. F.S. STREET) (Resources for Biblical Study 90; Atlanta, GA 2017) 287-309, here 303.

Turning to the crucial raising of Lazarus, Moore claims that Jesus weeps out of disgust at the scent of decay: “What makes Jesus’ eyes water in 11,35 is a certain smell, indeed a certain unmistakable stench, as yet only wafted on the breeze, for he is still some distance from Lazarus’s tomb”³⁷. There are several challenges in this reading of the Lazarus episode, not least of which is the question of whether it is possible for humans to cry from exposure to foul odor. The literature on crying is enormous, and encompasses evolutionary biology, psychology, history, and beyond³⁸. I am unaware of any evidence of tears elicited by foul odors, sights, or tastes. To put it differently, I am unaware of any culture that communicates disgust through tears, or that anyone in the ancient Mediterranean (or anywhere else) understood crying as a marker of disgust³⁹. It would be unlikely indeed for John to indicate Jesus’ disgust in a way impossible for anyone to interpret correctly, at least until the ascent of the affect theory on which Moore bases his reading. At any rate, in the narrative context set up by John, Jesus cannot weep from the smell of Lazarus’s corpse because he weeps well before he reaches the tomb; he is not even in sight of it (“He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’”, John 11,34), let alone close enough to catch the scent of decay from a still sealed tomb. Furthermore, while the foul odor of Lazarus’s corpse is inescapable once the tomb is opened, disgust terms are conspicuously absent, despite the stench of Lazarus’s decaying corpse. While the sisters warn Jesus that Lazarus’s corpse already smells (ἡδὴ ὀζει), this need not be read as a sign of disgust; the phrasing ἡδὴ ὀζει emphasizes time as much as scent. The point is not to warn Jesus that it would be unpleasant, but that it would be pointless. Jesus is far too late to do anything to help (cf. John 11,21,32). Despite the smell, neither the women nor Jesus avoid or shrink from the corpse (John 11,39), nor does the author include any further disgust elicitors for narrative “color”, in contrast with later apocryphal adaptations of the story (see below).

Thus, despite the stench of the corpse of their brother and friend, there is no indication in John’s narrative that the women or Jesus feel disgust. Nor should they, because, as the Gospel makes abundantly clear, the women love Lazarus, as does Jesus (11,3.36). Humans engage in behaviors with loved ones that put them into contact with disgust-eliciting substances

³⁷ MOORE, “Why the Johannine Jesus Weeps”, 303.

³⁸ See the comprehensive survey of A.J.J.M. VINGERHOETS, *Why Only Humans Weep. Unravelling the Mysteries of Tears* (Oxford 2013).

³⁹ VINGERHOETS, *Why Only Humans Weep*, 81, includes two taxonomies of crying based on eliciting events and social function (of ten and five basic categories of tears). Disgust is not among them.

and smells, in sex, in child-rearing, in caring for the sick, the elderly, and the disabled, and in death ⁴⁰. The challenges of caring for such bodily needs (before and after death) are profound, but feelings of disgust (like any emotion) can be significantly mitigated by professional training and by simple affection, love (φιλία), which the Gospel insists Jesus felt for Lazarus, and which we may presume his sisters felt as well. Therefore, there is no disgust at the tomb.

Jesus' resurrection might seem another opportunity for the Evangelists to meditate on the moral power of disgust, but here again, even where Luke and John include visceral details of his bodily suffering, the Evangelists evoke very different emotional responses in the narrative. In Luke's telling, Jesus presents his hands and feet as proof of his resurrection to quell his disciples' understandable fear (τεταραγμένοι) and doubt (διαλογισμοί) (Luke 24,38). Luke, however, does not mention Jesus' wounds, though the logic of the passage implies that he still bears them as the proof he offers. The apostles' response is not disgust, but joy and wonder (Luke 24,41, ἔτι δὲ ἀπιστούντων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ θαυμαζόντων). Nowhere does any concern with disgust enter the narrative.

The case is the same for John's even more graphic telling. Moore's analysis of the Fourth Gospel as structured around the heaving convulsions of disgust turns to the resurrection as another example of the theme. While conceding that Jesus' body "does not decay" and "is incapable of decay", and that "there is no stench of putrefying flesh from which to recoil", he claims that John's Christology is inescapably about rot ⁴¹. The Word became flesh "is rotting flesh and rot-resistant flesh" in Jesus' "not entirely successful resurrection", unsuccessful inasmuch as he still bears the marks of crucifixion and because he changes his appearance (John 20,4; 21,4) ⁴². Jesus' body is disgusting, according to Moore, as "the traumatic marks on the risen body bloodily smudge, even erase altogether, the human animal/nonhuman distinction", a core disgust elicitor discussed previously ⁴³. Furthermore, "[a]s marks of death, and hence of decomposition, the wounds on the risen body are, in effect, gangrenous, and incurably so" ⁴⁴. It is unclear

⁴⁰ ROZIN – HAIDT – MCCAULEY, "Disgust", 828, focus on the neutralized (or even positive transformation) of disgust elicitors in sexual intimacy, but the phenomenon applies to other areas of intimacy and love.

⁴¹ MOORE, "Why the Johannine Jesus Weeps", 304, 305, 307. In the same essay (306-307) he characterizes "high Johannine christology" as "[m]ore precisely [...] *haut goût*, [...] the *haute cuisine* practice of preparing and consuming decomposing food", a Christological formulation drawn from E. Brinkema's reading of the 1989 film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover*.

⁴² MOORE, "Why the Johannine Jesus Weeps", 305, 307, 308.

⁴³ MOORE, "Why the Johannine Jesus Weeps", 307.

⁴⁴ MOORE, "Why the Johannine Jesus Weeps", 307.

on what textual basis Moore posits animal/human boundary violations or imagery of tissue death, both of which would indeed be properly understood as disgust elicitors, and both of which are absent from the Johannine story. Other early Christian authors used such animal imagery, as discussed above (Luke 16,21; Mark 5,13 parr.; Mark 7,27-28 par.), and gangrene is an image by which early Christians evoked disgust (2 Tim 2,17, for which see below). It is thus all the more striking that John avoids any such imagery. When the risen Jesus shows Thomas his wounds, he does so without any language of disgust (John 20,27) ⁴⁵. The Fourth Gospel is not explicit about what emotions it imagines the disciples were feeling, but it is far from clear that disgust is intended. The Lukan evocation of joy and wonder seems more apposite to Thomas's statement of belief (John 20,27-28). The Evangelist expects his readers to be "happy" (μακάριοι) in understanding Jesus' resurrection, even if they have not witnessed the Messiah's wounds themselves (John 20,29) ⁴⁶. The resurrection appearances in Luke and John recall Boddice's point about the risks of projecting disgust on Plutarch and Plato ⁴⁷. While a corpse or a wounded, resurrected body might indeed be objects of disgust, they need not be, any more than Plutarch's abattoir imagery or Leontius's unstoppable desire to gaze at executed criminals. The gruesome sights described in the Gospels are not meant as objects of disgust, but as cause for wonder, fascination, joy, and happiness.

Paul, Luke, and John thus describe common and intuitive disgust elicitors, "core" and "projective": incest, skin disease, body envelope violations, unclean animals, and dead bodies. Yet in all cases the absence of disgust is conspicuous. When emotion words are used in the context of such disgust elicitors, Paul and the Evangelists describe — and thereby model for their audiences — very different passions. They instead express grief (1 Cor 5, John 11), surprise (Luke 24,41), joy (Luke 24:41), and happiness (John 20,29). Such instances of "disgust" are useful examples of the challenges of addressing emotions across historical divides, so comfortable is it to conflate ancient experience to modern common sense.

⁴⁵ While Thomas had previously claimed he would not believe unless he could put his fingers and hand in Jesus' wounds (John 20,25), he does not do so when given the opportunity, not out of disgust but as a sign of his faith and projecting awe and wonder (John 20,28).

⁴⁶ Μακάριος is most basically an emotion word denoting a pleasant affective state, similar to "happiness". It, however, is usually assimilated in English biblical translations to the language of blessing, which gives a misleading sense of the emotional dynamics of the word, as discussed in W.S. VORSTER, "Stoics and Early Christians on Blessedness", *Greeks, Romans, and Christians*. Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe (eds. D.L. BALCH – E. FERGUSON – W.A. MEEKS) (Minneapolis, MN 1990) 38-51.

⁴⁷ BODDICE, *History of Feelings*, 62-72.

It is also helpful to remember that in the perspective of the psychology of constructed emotion and the history of emotion, disgust — as emotion — is not a psychological faculty or physiological reflex but a concept: it is a way of making sense of internal and external sensations within a certain embodied context ⁴⁸. While an image like a dead body or an open sore might incite a similar preconscious affective response across time and cultures (as generally intense and unpleasant), the emotional sense (and emotional category) one makes out of that experience is not universal, but differs among cultures and individuals. Furthermore, it can be consciously and unconsciously altered, through socialization, persuasion, and mimesis.

A recent study in cognitive neuroscience shows just how malleable allegedly “basic” or “universal” emotions like disgust are. This study showed test subjects a mix of images to elicit responses of fear and disgust, along with “neutral” images. Subjects were then led to classify their responses to the emotions as “fear”, “disgust”, or a new emotional concept, “morbid fascination” ⁴⁹. The subjects were told (incorrectly) that the experiment would identify which emotion they were feeling from an fMRI scan ⁵⁰. What the fMRIs actually revealed to the scientists was a biological marker for changing emotion concepts. When subjects classified their reactions to disturbing images, such as victims of auto accidents, as “fascination” rather than disgust or fear (usually through experimental prompting or manipulation), their brains became more active. This is not because the scan identified a locus or circuit in the brain for “morbid fascination”, but because the brain has to work harder in learning and applying a new emotion concept, just as the brain and body have to work harder at any new or unfamiliar activity. We cannot study ancient texts in the same way as modern experimental subjects, and it is precarious to intuit how a hypothetical ancient reader would have responded to a text. My point here is that when Paul reframes the proper emotional response to incest as grief, when Luke and John reframe the proper emotional response to open wounds as joy and wonder, or when Luke variously violates the typical responses to other disgust elicitors, it not only reflects a

⁴⁸ This perspective is covered and applied to a range of social phenomena in BARRETT, *How Emotions Are Made*.

⁴⁹ S. OOSTERWIJK – K.A. LINDQUIST – M. ADEBAYO – L.F. BARRETT, “The Neural Representation of Typical and Atypical Experiences of Negative Images: Comparing Fear, Disgust and Morbid Fascination”, *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 11 (2016) 11-22.

⁵⁰ This is not currently possible; in the perspective of the Psychological Construction theory of mind and emotion it is inherently impossible, since emotions do not exist as circuits or programs in the brain or body, but are concepts and thus immeasurable.

diversity of ancient emotional experience, though that it is itself important, but it also encourages among their readers a process of emotional learning and transformation, taking place not just on the plane of discourse (which we can observe) but through physical changes in the body and brain (which we cannot). Along the lines of what Shantz has observed as a shift in cognition and emotion in Gal 3,27-28, the trend toward minimizing disgust language and imagery in moral exhortation and narrative in favor of emotional experiences of grief, happiness, joy, and awe should be considered an important component of the early Christian movement, inseparable from its ritual, morality, and narratives⁵¹. Yet this shift in emotion, however widespread it may be in Paul's letters and the Gospels, did not become normative among early Christian writers.

III. CHRISTIAN DISGUST AND ANTI-HERETICAL POLEMIC

This revaluation of disgust is an important and distinctive part of the early Christian movement, as well as part of the emotional repertoire of Christianity that will resurface throughout the history of Christianity and into post-Christian modernity, which remains relevant to contemporary debates about disgust as a component of morality and ethics⁵². It would coexist, however, with another emotional trajectory, which encourages disgust as a virtuous marker of morality and in-group cohesion.

Perhaps the earliest Christian text to employ the moral power of disgust is the Revelation of John, in which several instances of disgust language occur, although less explicitly than the most "disgusting" passage in the Gospels (Luke's description of Lazarus). Revelation has also been the subject of study by S. Moore, who characterizes the text — as he does the Gospel of John — as singularly concerned with disgust and vomit. He writes, "The movement [vomiting] is also the predominant (e)motion that Revelation seeks to induce in its audience, a heaving of the stomach, obtained by rhetorically thrusting its fingers down the audience's throat. Revelation is a work of disgust. It wants its audience to retch on Rome"⁵³. Yet, disgust remains at most a leitmotif in John's visions. Two passages reference the abominations (βδέλυγμα) and defilements of the whore

⁵¹ See SHANTZ, "Emotion, Cognition, and Social Change", 269, who hypothesizes that the "emotional-cognitive competition" reflected in Gal 3,28 "raises another means that was available for this remarkable, if partial, attempt at sociocultural change in Christian origins. [...] Certainly it seems a remarkable resource for social transformation".

⁵² E.g., in NUSSBAUM, *Hiding from Humanity*.

⁵³ S.D. MOORE, "Retching on Rome: Vomitous Loathing and Visceral Disgust in Affect Theory and the Apocalypse of John", *Biblical Interpretation* 22 (2014) 503-528, here 524.

of Babylon and those excluded from the New Jerusalem (Rev 17,4-5; 21,8,27), the same purity language which occasionally occurs in the Gospels and draws on Jewish traditions of ritual purity as transmitted through the Septuagint. The only other elicitor of disgust in Revelation is a single mention of spitting water: “So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Rev 3,16). In contrast to Moore’s paraphrase, this expulsive act is performed (rhetorically) by God, not Christians. It is furthermore not directed at Rome, but at other Christians. Even this expulsion is not, to be fair, “retching”, which in English refers to expelling matter from the stomach or esophagus⁵⁴. God will indeed spit them out (ἐμέσαι), but he expels the lukewarm water from his mouth (στόματος), which is far lower on any register of disgust. These three passages comprise the entirety of disgust imagery in Revelation, which seems insufficient to characterize it as “a work of disgust”.

This is not to suggest that the author’s use of disgust is not significant. In fact, God’s distaste at the lukewarm apostates — the neither-here-nor-there Christians — even points to the actual density of disgust language in the earliest strata of Christian textuality. It is in the latest components now included in the New Testament that we find disgust as a felt emotion, either core or projective: the Pastoral Epistles, 2 Peter, and Jude. Visceral language of disgust features in these short, second-century letters. And like God’s spit-take in Revelation, the focus of disgust is other Christians.

The Epistle of Jude reflects this conflation of disgusting behavior with disgust at the theology or ecclesiology of other Christians. Jude signals his interest in disgust by condemning Sodom and Gomorrah and their “sexual immorality (ἐκπορνεύσασαι) and [...] unnatural lust”, a marker of disgust-based virtue signaling that is familiar in many periods of history (Jude 7)⁵⁵. The Sodomites and Gomorrans parallel the proximate target of his condemnation: “certain intruders” intent to “pervert the grace of God into licentiousness” (Jude 4), whom he calls “dreamers” (ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι, Jude 8). They, like the foul residents of the cities on the plain “defile (or stain) the flesh” (σάρκα μὲν μιάινουσιν, Jude 8; cf. Jude 23). They are themselves “stains” or “blemishes” (σπιλάδες) on the love-feasts (Jude 12)⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v.

⁵⁵ See Martha Nussbaum’s exploration of the intersection of disgust and Christian debates about (predominantly male) homosexuality in *Hiding from Humanity*, 1-25.

⁵⁶ The “stain” of v. 12 is a textual problem, recognized as such since antiquity. “Stain” is a reading that goes back to 2 Pet 2,13. Cf. Jude 23 for the (moral) staining of clothing, τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐσπιλωμένον χιτῶνα. See J.H. NEYREY, *2 Peter, Jude* (AB 37C; New Haven, CT 1993) 74-75.

2 Peter writes in the same tradition and is textually dependent on Jude ⁵⁷. He again draws on the common disgust elicitor of homosexuality and compares false prophets to the Sodomites and Gomorrans. He condemns their “defiled” or “stained desire” (ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μiasμοῦ), which, like Jude before him, he connects with their contempt for authority (κυριότητος καταφρονοῦντας, 2 Pet 2,10). He compares them to animals, “born to be caught and killed” (2 Pet 2,12), and calls them “blots and blemishes” (σπίλοι καὶ μῶμοι) (2 Pet 2,13), citing Jude 12 and incorporating Levitical language of leprosy (notably in contrast to the instances of actual leprosy in the Gospels). He speaks of the same false prophets as trapped in the “defilements” or “stains” of the world (τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου) (2 Pet 2,20). They are like pigs and dogs: they delight in vomit and filth (2,22) ⁵⁸.

The short letters to Timothy and Titus also proceed in this same manner. Like Jude and Pseudo-Peter, Pseudo-Paul takes aim at other would-be Christians, chattering and spreading impiety; their teachings are disgusting, which “spread like gangrene” (ὁ λόγος αὐτῶν ὡς γάγγραινα νομὴν ἔξει, 2 Tim 2,17). The “rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers” are “impure” and “defiled” (μεμΐανται) in their minds (Titus 1,10.15). They are “loathsome” (βδελυκτοί) (Titus 1,16). Others among Titus’s imagined congregation are abominable (στυγητοί) (Titus 3,3). In Titus, much like 2 Timothy, Jude and 2 Peter (and to a lesser extent Revelation), we see the primary Greek terms of disgust used (μιάσμα, στυγητός, βδελυκτός, and σπίλος). These texts, apocalyptic and epistolary alike, model or encourage feelings of revulsion as reliable markers of morality and virtue. Christians should recognize certain behaviors and beliefs as revolting or disgusting, stained, rotted, corrupted, and loathsome (like gangrene, or dogs eating vomit and feces), and like God they should be prepared to spit the offending substances out. This embrace of disgust as a rhetorical and paraenetic component contrasts sharply with the Gospels and Paul. It is also important to observe that the focus of Christian disgust as a moral emotion is neither Rome nor outsiders (e.g., “Jews” or “heathens”). It is targeted toward other Christians, who teach the wrong things (perhaps the Jewish Law and circumcision, perhaps fanciful philosophical myths), claim prophetic or charismatic power, and condemn or disrespect proper Christian authority ⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ See NEYREY, *2 Peter, Jude*, 120–122, for an overview of the state of the question and bibliography.

⁵⁸ 2 Peter cites Prov 26,11; vomit: ἔξέπραμα, filth: βόρβορος.

⁵⁹ Note the theme of purity in 2 Peter and Jude (and in other books) discussed in NEYREY, *2 Peter, Jude*, 10–14.

The language of Christian disgust as virtuous is found also in second-century theological polemics, which elaborate on the motifs of disgust in the New Testament texts, focusing revulsion at other Christians, including heretics and apostates. We may see this in the “apostolic father” Papias’s narration of Judas’s death. Already by the turn of the first Christian century, storytellers had begun to flesh out the death of the first apostate, with or without disgusting imagery. More disgusting is Luke’s version (Acts 1,18), in which Judas falls to his death and is disemboweled (ἐξεχύθη πάντα τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ). Papias elaborates on this body envelope violation. After betraying Jesus and setting out to enjoy his new riches, Judas contracts dropsy, and his body swells with interstitial water. Papias does not skimp on the details, using explicit language of disgust (ἀηδής)⁶⁰. Just one example will suffice: “[H]is genitals became more disgusting (ἀηδέστηρον) and larger than anyone’s; simply by relieving himself, to his wanton shame, he emitted pus and worms that flowed through his entire body”⁶¹. As in Luke’s version, Judas died on his land, and Papias claims that it still stinks so much that passersby must hold their nose. “This was how great an outpouring he made from his flesh on the ground,” he writes⁶².

Much as apostates prompt core and projective disgust of Christians, so do those other enemies identified in 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, and Jude, those so-called Christians who disturb and teach the wrong things: heretics, as second-century Christians would label them. The earliest surviving anti-heretical treatise is that of Irenaeus of Lyon (ca. 180), *The Detection and Overthrow of Gnosis, Falsely So-Called*. Irenaeus’s primary target is the school of Valentinus. Early in the first book of his five volumes against the heresies, Irenaeus presents the foundational creation myth taught by the Valentinian teacher Ptolemy, in the tradition of Plato’s *Timaeus*⁶³. It posited that the phenomenal world of perception and embodiment was formed out of an ancient cosmic error, which Ptolemy traces to one of

⁶⁰ See the recent treatment by A.R. SOLEVÅG, *Negotiating the Disabled Body*. Representations of Disability in Early Christian Texts (Early Christianity and Its Literature 23; Atlanta, GA 2018) 117-131. Solevåg observes that Papias’s description of Judas is intended to establish boundaries of Christian propriety and belonging (130-131), but insists that implicit in the passage are traces of ancient physiognomy and standards of masculinity.

⁶¹ Papias frag. 4, *Apostolic Fathers II* (trans. B. EHRMAN) (LCL 25; Cambridge, MA 2003) 106-107.

⁶² Papias frag. 4, *Apostolic Fathers II*, 107.

⁶³ Sometimes called the “Grande notice” of Irenaeus, whose sources and import are reassessed by G. CHIAPPARINI, “Irenaeus and the Gnostic Valentinus. Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Church of Rome around the Middle of the Second Century”, *ZAC* 18 (2013) 95-119. The Greek text is preserved in a lengthy quotation in Epiphanius of Salamis: F.-M.-M. SAGNARD, *La Gnose valentinienne et le témoignage de Saint Irénée* (Paris 1957) 31-50.

the divine “aeons” in the heavenly fullness (πλήρωμα, playing off Pauline language) named Wisdom (Σοφία). Wisdom had strained to achieve the impossible: to gain acquaintance (or gnosis) of God the father. In her failure she produced passions of sadness (λύπη), fear (φόβος), disturbance (ἐκπλήξις), and ignorance (ἄγνοια), and was expelled with her passions from the fullness⁶⁴. This process is recapitulated outside the heavenly fullness by another “Wisdom”, Lower Wisdom or Achamoth⁶⁵. The relevant detail here is that Ptolemy envisions a world of matter bound up with and created through the primal passions of Wisdom and Achamoth; the seas and rivers, for example, are remnants of her tears at recognizing her error, and ultimately of her repentant reacceptance into the fullness, a model for the gnosis and repentance that Christians can experience⁶⁶.

The myth was probably quite poetic in Ptolemy’s (now lost) telling of it, but Irenaeus turns to disgust to render the myth offensive. It is well known that the one bodily fluid that does not generally trigger disgust is tears. Irenaeus wonders: surely in her distress Wisdom perspired as well. If the tears produce saline waters, then the fresh water and fountains, he claims, are her sweat⁶⁷. And what of “hot and pungent” waters? Irenaeus refrains from naming the substance, but the implication is clear: “You ought to know what she did and from what member these were emitted! Indeed, such products fit in well with their hypothesis”⁶⁸. A proper emotion of disgust is clear evidence that the Christian should stay away from the ridiculous and foul heretics. Irenaeus’s logic recalls that of the conservative ethicists Devlin and Kass, who argue (in rather different modern contexts) for the wisdom of disgust: if we feel revulsion toward something — e.g., cloning or certain sex acts — we should trust that it is wrong, even if we cannot explain why⁶⁹.

Later polemicists embraced disgust as a marker of social boundaries and purity, making visceral the line between insider and outsider. As an apostate like Judas might die in an especially disgusting way, so might the occasional pagan. Lactantius details the grotesque indignities of the emperor Galerius in *De morte persecutorum*⁷⁰. Heretics too could meet their end

⁶⁴ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.2.1-4, *Irénée de Lyon, Contre les hérésies, Livre I*, vol. 2 (eds. A. ROUSSEAU – L. DOUTRELEAU) (SC 264; Paris 1979) 42.

⁶⁵ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.4.

⁶⁶ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.4.1-2.

⁶⁷ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.4.4.

⁶⁸ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.4.4, in St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against the Heresies* (trans. D.J. UNGER) (ACW 55; New York 1992) 32, modified with ROUSSEAU – DOUTRELEAU, *Contre les hérésies*, 71.

⁶⁹ NUSSBAUM, *From Disgust to Humanity*, 8-13.

⁷⁰ Lactantius, *De morte persecutorum* 33. Other deaths of the persecutors are not disgusting.

in disgust, as Arius is widely remembered as having died in what is perhaps history's worst case of explosive diarrhea, graphically described by the historian Socrates ⁷¹. The moral is clear: the disgust one feels in imagining Arius's wretched end should be projected morally at the teachings he espoused, as well as toward those who espouse them, a moral disgust which encourages theological and disciplinary purity.

Heretics may also be identified by their delight in the foul, especially bodily fluids. Epiphanius of Salamis wrote a theological "medicine chest" (πανάρτιον) in the late-fourth century to combat the poison of heresy. His account of the Gnostics, whom he insists are his contemporaries, employs the varieties of visceral and moral disgust seen in Irenaeus and other earlier sources, now taken to an extreme. The Gnostics are defined by their pollution and the disgust they elicit, as the devil led them on "so as to pollute (μᾶναι) the minds, hearts, hands, mouths, bodies and souls of the persons he has trapped in such deep darkness" ⁷². His account brings together all of the aspects of moral and visceral disgust that we have seen so far: body envelope violations, illicit sexual behavior, contact and consumption of bodily fluids, cannibalism, disease, animals, and swarming insects. It is no accident that Epiphanius draws on Revelation, 2 Peter, and Jude ⁷³, whose metaphorical disgust elicits Epiphanius literalizes in the ritual activities of the heretical Gnostics. These Gnostics go by the nickname Borborites, or "filthies", an epithet which points to Jude's characterization of intruders as pigs who wallow in filth, βόρβορος ⁷⁴. These heretics are disgusting, and they revel in it. They are like a disease, "a malignant itch, or leprosy" ⁷⁵. They are "like a swarm of insects, infecting us with diseases, smelly eruptions, and sores through their error with its mythology" ⁷⁶. They are like dogs and pigs, "for they dispose of their corruption like dogs and pigs", who "are polluted in this way and eat their bodies' discharge" ⁷⁷. But for Epiphanius, the actions of the heretics are not merely metaphorical.

⁷¹ See E. MUEHLENBERG, "The Legend of Arius' Death: Imagination, Space and Filth in Late Ancient Historiography", *Past and Present* 277 (2015) 3-29, here 6-10.

⁷² *Pan.* 26.3.4, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 2nd ed. (trans. F. WILLIAMS) (NHMS 63; Leiden 2009); *Epiphanius. Ancoratus und Panarion (haereses 1-33)* (ed. K. HOLL) (GCS 25; Leipzig 1915).

⁷³ In *Pan.* 25.3.1 he traces the Gnostics to the Nicolaitans of Revelation. He cites Jude in *Pan.* 26.11.3-4 and 26.13.7-8.

⁷⁴ This pejorative is perhaps derived satirically from the Barbeloites, as the Barbelo was one of the primary aspects of god that Gnostics worshipped: B. LAYTON, *Gnostic Scriptures* (New York 1987) 200.

⁷⁵ *Pan.* 25.7.2 (trans. WILLIAMS).

⁷⁶ *Pan.* 26.1.2 (trans. WILLIAMS).

⁷⁷ *Pan.* 26.11.4 (trans. WILLIAMS), citing Jude 8-10.

Unlike Irenaeus, Epiphanius's disgust is not merely by implication, but an integral component of the Gnostic view of the universe and their interpretation of the New Testament. Their myth, Epiphanius claims, places the heavenly aeon Barbelo in a role that evokes that of Wisdom in Ptolemy's myth. Like Wisdom, Barbelo weeps, but unique to Epiphanius's version, her return to the heavenly fullness is brought about by collecting the ejaculations of the rulers of the material world. She "keeps appearing in some beautiful form to the archons and stealing the seed which is generated by their climax and ejaculation — supposedly to recover her power which has been sown in various of them" ⁷⁸. The ritual consumption of semen, recapitulating the mythological actions of Barbelo and the Last Supper, is the core of their eucharistic ritual, which include orgies, followed by eucharists celebrated with semen ("the body of Christ") and menstrual blood ("the blood of Christ"), which Epiphanius describes in detail ⁷⁹. The Gnostics violate all sexual and bodily boundaries: they share wives in common, men have sex with one another, and other men masturbate and consume their own semen (in an interpretation of Eph 4,28) ⁸⁰. Should any Borborite get pregnant, they "extract the fetus at the stage which is appropriate for their enterprise, take this aborted infant, and cut it up in a trough with a pestle. And they mix honey, pepper, and certain other perfumes and spices with it to keep from getting sick, and then all the revelers in this <herd> of swine and dogs assemble, and each eats a piece of the child with his fingers" ⁸¹. This, he claims, is what they call "the 'perfect Passover'" ⁸². Epiphanius claims great discomfort at detailing such disgusting acts, but feels "compelled to [do so] from the excess of the feeling of grief (ἀλγούσης)" ⁸³. Epiphanius is clearly pushing the boundaries of disgust and prurience here, as was the historian Socrates in his narrative of Arius's death, but the point is clear. Virtuous Christians, pure Christians, feel disgust at heresy. Not to feel disgust is to be a heretic, to be disgusting.

⁷⁸ *Pan.* 25.2.2 (trans. WILLIAMS). LAYTON (*Gnostic Scriptures*, 200) suggests that this depiction, along with other aspects of Epiphanius's account, may be indebted to Manichaean influence.

⁷⁹ *Pan.* 26.4.5-26.5.7; 26.9.3.

⁸⁰ *Pan.* 26.4.1 (sharing spouses), 26.11.7 (homosexuality), 26.5.7, 26.11.1-2 (masturbation and semen consumption). The Borborite theology invented by Epiphanius shares much in common with the disgust-Christology discovered by Moore in John, in which Jesus is disgusted by the very nature of embodiment and creation, and then instantiates that disgust in flamboyantly revolting ritual: MOORE, "Why the Johannine Jesus Weeps", 303, 307.

⁸¹ *Pan.* 26.5.5 (trans. WILLIAMS).

⁸² *Pan.* 26.5.6 (trans. WILLIAMS).

⁸³ *Pan.* 26.3.3 (trans. WILLIAMS).

CONCLUSION

I have identified two divergent modes of thinking about, or thinking with, disgust in the early Christian centuries. Building on previous scholarship that has focused on individual books or passages, I have surveyed disgust in a wider scope of the New Testament corpus, along with several post-biblical texts which elaborate on narrative or ritual elements within biblical literature. The first of these ways of disgust, seen independently in the letters of Paul and the Gospels of Luke and John, pushes feelings of disgust to the margins while addressing moral and theological issues. While they differ among themselves, they share a common tendency to avoid disgust language even when describing situations that would normally elicit it, such as incest, decay, or body envelope violations. Instead, they model other passions or emotions: grief, wonder, joy, and happiness. In some cases where disgust words are used, they reflect purity/impurity language drawn from the LXX in an abstract or projective sense (e.g., Paul's mention of defiled conscience). In the sole example of clear disgust imagery in the Gospels, Luke's parable of Lazarus, the cultural logic of disgust is turned on its head. The disgusting person is blessed, and the disgusted person is damned via his fastidious revulsion.

Another way of disgust is widespread in New Testament sources and among later interpreters. Such authors find disgust to be a useful moral emotion. They elicit disgust in their readers when attacking the beliefs and practices of others: other Christians, or at least others who claim fraudulently to be Christians. Such people and their actions are disgusting, and to feel disgust at them is a positive emotion to be cultivated, no less than to feel love for fellow believers or joy at the resurrection. While New Testament texts tend to use disgust imagery in a more metaphorical or projective sense, later writers elide any metaphor/body distinction. The heretical and apostate are disgusting in body and soul.

These two ways of disgust in early Christianity would continue to coexist in debates about morality and emotion; as has been intimated above, they may still be seen in rather differing ways in contemporary debates about disgust and morality among philosophers and psychologists. But these approaches toward disgust were not the only ones embraced by Christian moralists. Moving away from the New Testament and its early reception, later Christian ascetic writers embraced and even reveled in the nauseating and revolting, not as a marker of the heretical erring of other Christians, but as part of the practices of the pious and holy. Rot, decay, and necrotizing disease become center points of the lives of ascetic women and men, components of their self-abnegation (and control) and their withdrawal

— spatially, socially, and emotionally — from “the world” ⁸⁴. Such an embrace of disgust as a mode of piety surfaces in biblical narrative in the ascetic culture of late antiquity. Late Coptic homilies, for example, retell the resurrection of Lazarus, now replete with lurid descriptions of decay and stench (by the narrator and from the mouths of Martha and Jesus) ⁸⁵. How and why Christian ways of disgust shifted from the trajectories I have described in the New Testament and its early reception is a topic for a more expansive history of early Christian emotions. Here I have set out more fully the breadth of reflection on disgust as a moral emotion in the New Testament and its early reception, which sets early Christian emotional practices more clearly in the contexts of New Testament and early Christian literature and recent work on the neuroscience and history of emotion.

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA
USA

Andrew CRISLIP

SUMMARY

Disgust is recognized as a “moral emotion”, and as such has been a subject of recent attention in New Testament studies. This essay identifies two ways of thinking with disgust in New Testament literature and its early reception. One discourages or suppresses disgust, avoiding disgust vocabulary and imagery in contexts even where expected. Another encourages disgust as a moral emotion in critiquing and ostracizing wrongdoers, thus maintaining in-group purity and identity. These two ways of thinking about disgust as a moral emotion exist in tension in the New Testament and beyond, and frame even contemporary moral debates.

⁸⁴ S.A. HARVEY, *Scenting Salvation*. Early Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination (Transformations of the Classical Heritage 42; Berkeley, CA 2006) 201-221.

⁸⁵ The literary trend is surveyed in A. CRISLIP, “Resurrection, Emotion, and Embodiment in Egyptian Monastic Literature”, in *Unity of Body and Soul in Patristic and Byzantine Thought* (eds. A. USACHEVA – J. ULRICH – S. BHAYRO) (Contexts of Ancient and Medieval Anthropology 1; Leiden – Paderborn 2020) 144-169.

RECENSIONES

Vetus Testamentum

Petra SCHMIDTKUNZ, *Das Moselied des Deuteronomiums*. Untersuchungen zu Text und Theologie von Dtn 32,1-43 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe 124). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2020. xviii-451 p. €109,00.

The so-called “Song of Moses” in Deut 32,1-43 is a text of boundless richness in textual challenges, poetic devices, inner-biblical echoes, theology and more. A wealth of scholarly publications has focussed on this text, scrutinizing it from every possible angle in countless articles and commentaries. Monographies too have been dedicated to this text: for example, S.C. Alday, *El Cántico de Moisés (Dt 32)* (Bibliotheca Hispana Biblica 3; Madrid 1970), P. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (Oudtestamentische Studiën; Leiden 1996), and T.D. Nilsen, *The Origins of Deuteronomy 32*. Intertextuality, Memory, Identity (New York 2018). Schmidtkunz’s monograph results from the author’s participation in the research group “Natur in politischen Ordnungsentwürfen: Antike — Mittelalter — Frühe Neuzeit” at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, and its subproject “Das gezähmte Chaos und die göttliche Gabe der Fruchtbarkeit. Naturmotivik in der althebräischen Königsideologie und ihre Transformation in der heilsgeschichtlichen Theologie des Alten Testaments”.

Schmidtkunz introduces her book by posing questions from the perspective of the reader: Whence come the expressions about YHWH that are so atypical for Deuteronomy? Is the middle part of the Song about Israel or its enemies? Why are the historical circumstances not more clearly described? From which time does the poem come, and how did it end up in its present place in Deuteronomy? Schmidtkunz points out that previous research has tended to focus on individual aspects of the text, while her study focuses on the larger picture which emerges when considering several different aspects together. Schmidtkunz emphasises a classical methodology, “Textkritik, Literarkritik, Traditionskritik, Formkritik, Redaktionskritik”, with “Textpragmatik” as the integrating perspective, along with occasional excursuses on particular topics. The introduction to the book serves its function well by situating the study in its larger context. However, Schmidtkunz’s otherwise well researched account of the history of research may not do full justice to some of the more comprehensive studies of the Song. For example, Sanders’ impressive study (*The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*) is mentioned only in passing and only in relation to two of the many aspects he analyses. Schmidtkunz’s questions, comprehensive approach and conclusions are similar to those of Nilsen (*The Origins of Deuteronomy 32*), but her book is not mentioned.

The first of the main chapters, “Der Text des Moseliedes. Übersetzung und Textkritik”, provides, through text criticism, a first step in the reconstruction of what Schmidtkunz calls the “Urtext” of Deut 43,1-43. The chapter usefully presents the main witnesses to the text and provides helpful charts and appendices. Most of the textual choices made by Schmidtkunz are mentioned in footnotes, while she wisely dedicates the main text to larger sections discussing the more complex issues (related to vv. 5, 8-9, 43). Though this reader does not always agree with the conclusions, Schmidtkunz provides careful considerations and rigorous arguments. However, it would have been interesting to find an elaboration of the concept of “Urtext”, as well as a theoretical and problematising discussion on the criteria used for deciding for or against the readings.

Chapter Two, “Der Gedankengang des Moseliedes. Inhalt, Textpragmatik und Literarkritik”, constitutes a second step in the reconstruction of the “Urtext” by identifying early additions. Source criticism is the main approach, with text pragmatics as a tool, searching for clues in the text itself, such as whether the communication of the message to the readers/hearers is disturbed. The short theoretical discussion is followed by a detailed analysis of the grammar and the content of each verse of the text. Appealing to syntactical and thematic breaks, Schmidtkunz identifies vv. 5aß, 14e, 15c, 30-33 (at different stages), 43d-e (=41c-d) as early additions. In discussing v. 43, Schmidtkunz argues for an earlier distinction between YHWH’s people and other peoples, which, through the additions and lexical changes in MT and SP, becomes a distinction within YHWH’s people between those who are truly servants and those who are not. In this chapter, Schmidtkunz impresses with her attention to detail, and her analysis is thorough. However, both source and redaction criticism (which often use the same criteria) have been met with heavy opposition during the last few decades. For example, do breaks in grammar and/or content necessarily point to additions in the text? May it not be anachronistic to expect authors living in a different time, place and culture, to follow rules of modern or Western textual composition? Schmidtkunz does not enter this debate. If she had done so, she could have strengthened her arguments.

Chapter Three, “Die Motivik des Moseliedes. Innerbiblische Parallelen und Traditionskritik”, opens with a useful theoretical discussion of key concepts and categories from tradition criticism, literature studies and intertextuality. It also problematises well the fact that similarity does not necessarily indicate dependency. The bulk of the chapter analyses parallels between the Song of Moses and other texts in the Hebrew Bible, and considers whether the parallels deal with similar formulations, lexemes, key concepts or other issues. Schmidtkunz concludes convincingly that the Song of Moses is indeed similar to a vast range of other biblical texts. She discusses the relative dating of these texts, but this reader would have wished for a longer and more thorough elaboration, as this point is crucial for Schmidtkunz’s absolute dating of the Song of Moses to the middle of the Persian period. A valuable contribution in this chapter is found in the discussion of how the author of the Song of Moses transforms the older texts to fit the new context.

Chapter Four, “Die Form des Moseliedes. Gestalt und Textpragmatik von Dtn 32 im Vergleich mit den formgeschichtlich verwandten Kompositionen Pss 78; 81; 106; Neh 9; Jes 63-64”, offers an extensive comparison of the forms of the texts mentioned in the chapter title. A helpful chart showcases similarities and differences in form-critical aspects and is followed by a well-argued and detailed

analysis focussing on the literary contexts and the significance of the past for the addressees. Schmidtkunz concludes convincingly that, despite some differences between the texts, all of them present the past as a lesson of both YHWH's goodness and human errors which the audience may learn from. However, this reader misses clearer arguments behind the conclusions that the texts deal with identity, and why similarity means that these texts come from the same scribal milieu in the fifth-fourth century BCE.

Chapter Five, "Der Rahmen des Moseliedes. Textpragmatik und Redaktionskritik in Dtn 31–32", has as its starting point the many linguistic and logical inconsistencies both between the Song of Moses and its surrounding narrative frame, and within the frame itself. Previous scholars have different explanations of this, with the majority arguing that the Song is an independent composition that has been inserted into Deuteronomy, necessitating a narrative introduction. Schmidtkunz offers a translation of the text of the frame, followed by a detailed analysis of both connections and tensions within the frame itself, and a thorough discussion emphasising particularly lexical tensions between the introduction proper (Deut 31,16–22.28–30) and the Song. Based on her analysis, Schmidtkunz convincingly concludes with the majority position that the narrative frame in itself is a product of a process of growth, and that it is highly unlikely that the framework and the Song have a common origin. However, the claim that the Song is younger than the Deuteronomic narrative could have been better argued. Schmidtkunz goes on to explain that the incorporation of the Song into the Deuteronomic narrative gave the Song authority, while the Song also enhanced the message of the narrative.

The concluding chapter draws together the results from the preceding ones, elaborating on their conclusions. Schmidtkunz concludes that the "Urtext" of the Song of Moses was written in the fifth century BCE as a religious programmatic text that, by reaching back to existing traditions about YHWH and YHWH's acts towards YHWH's people, aimed at providing the hearers — who had lost their political autonomy in Yehud — a collective identity as God's people.

Neither the questions posed nor the methods used in this study are new. Schmidtkunz claims, rather, that she offers a "Neuuntersuchung" and that, unlike most previous research, she combines different aspects (pp. 1, 14). However, at least some others have already taken such integrative approaches, most recently Nilsen (*The Origins of Deuteronomy* 32) who offers a multi-perspective literary analysis combined with social identity theories and memory studies. Nilsen's conclusion is that Deuteronomy 32 aims at providing a common social identity for the people of Yehud, and that it was originally composed between 530 and 450 BCE by the same scribal group which composed the last part of the Book of Isaiah. The overlapping approach and the similar and at times even identical conclusions reached by Nilsen and by Schmidtkunz may mean that their studies strengthen each other.

While Schmidtkunz's study would have benefited from more elaborate theoretical discussions and clearer arguments on how certain conclusions are reached (including discussions of alternative explanations), the real strength lies in her careful and detailed analyses of the different aspects of the so-called Song of Moses.

VID Specialized University
Engelsminnegate 16A
4008 Stavanger (NO)
tina.nilsen@vid.no

Tina Dykesteen NILSEN

Laura Carlson HASLER, *Archival Historiography in Jewish Antiquity*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. xii-218 p. 16 × 24. £71.00

This is an intriguing book in which Laura Hasler treats Ezra-Nehemiah with a fresh and unexpected approach. Her main contribution is bringing the category of “archive” to the table of interpreters. Can the book Ezra-Nehemiah be seen as an archive? And if so, then what does that imply for its patchwork-character of seemingly unconnected narratives, lists, and letters? For a recent survey of the research on Ezra-Nehemiah, see L.-S. Tiemeyer, *Ezra-Nehemiah*. Israel’s Quest for Identity (T&T Clark Study Guides to the Old Testament; London – New York 2017).

She starts her inquiry with a discussion of ancient archives, the most famous of which are the “libraries” associated with Ashurbanipal and Alexandria. Archives are the result of the impulse to collect as much as possible. Rulers need a collection of documents and decrees in order to maintain their grip on society. Omen-literature is helpful in moments of decisions. Often, however, archives also contain not only documents necessary for rulers but also literary works, letters, lexical lists, and so forth. When collecting becomes a fury, the archive will be overabundant. Archives then function as a powerful source of memory and regulations, which helps rulers to steer the ship of state through turbulent times.

Although Hasler does not deny that the present text of Ezra and Nehemiah has its prehistory in documents and redactions, she treats Ezra-Nehemiah as a coherent whole. The category of archive plays a twofold role. On the one hand, the narratives refer to documents, preserved in Persian storehouses, which could inform the present Persian king about decisions made by his forefathers, as well as about the rebellious character of the former kingdom of Judah. The system of referring to texts in archives is part of the power play between the three poles: Jerusalem, Samaria, and Persia.

On the other hand, the composition contains elements that are not narrative in form: letters, lists, decrees, and documents. These texts inform the reader about the correspondence of the local elite, and they also give information about those who would have been returning from exile. Hasler presents and discusses all these texts. Correctly, she does not try to prove whether these documents are authentic or not. The answer to that question would require a different approach, with methods of analysis appropriate for evaluating the formal elements in such documents. Moreover, only the discovery of the original copies would allow a definitive answer to such questions. Hassler, instead, is interested in investigating the function of these archival documents. She connects the presence of “Persian archival material” with the question about cultural competition that permeates the text of Ezra-Nehemiah. Throughout the composition, the question of the acceptability of a specific form of Yahwism (not yet Judaism) plays a role. The authors and redactors of the two books are in search of narrative support for their concept of religion in which a closed and restricted community follows the regulations on Sabbath, tithes, and marriage that these authors and redactors consider fundamental. Stories like Ezra 7–10 and Nehemiah 4–5 and 8–12 are crystal clear examples. Hasler adds to this that the archival elements play a comparable role in defining the boundary between this Jerusalemite form of Yahwism and emerging Samaritanism, with Persian hegemony in the background. The various lists — independent from their original fiscal function — clearly describe who is “in” and who is not. Employing post-colonial

discourse, she argues that the archive in Ezra-Nehemiah is a space for counter-power against the Persian empire that helped the Yehudite community to overcome the disaster of exile and poverty.

After this, Hasler briefly turns her attention to the Book of Esther. She makes clear that this book — especially in its Old Greek translation — can also be seen as an archival form of history-writing. In a final chapter, she explores the purposes of the literary disruption that archival history-writing presents to the (modern) reader. She attends to the fact that in Ezra-Nehemiah and in Esther archiving takes place in the context of trauma. The exile as well as the Persian persecutions are correctly seen as traumatic events caused by an imperial power. Archiving the past, then, is a means of coping with the misery as well as a counter-power in the hands of the oppressed. Hasler refers in passing to the work of I. Löwisch (*Trauma Begets Genealogy. Gender and Memory in Chronicles* [Sheffield 2015]) who reads the gendered genealogies in 1 Chronicles from the perspective of both archive and identity. Löwisch arrives at the conclusion that genealogies, far from being boring, play an important role in the presentation of women within a community and its past. Here, too, power and control are distributed and communicated.

It is a pity that Hasler has overlooked the following point. The framework holding together the stories in the Book of Kings contains a repeated refrain in the form of a rhetorical question (e.g., “As for the other events of Azariah’s reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?”), or in the form of a statement (e.g., “The other events of Zechariah’s reign are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel”). The textual form of this formula exhibits variations, which are often explained as the footprints of various redactors. However, the function of the formula in the composition is clear (see, for instance, H. Weippert, “Die ‘deuteronomistischen’ Beurteilungen der Könige von Israel und Juda und das Problem der Redaktion der Königsbücher”, *Bib* 53 [1972] 301-339; T.C. Römer, *The So-called Deuteronomistic History. A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* [London – New York 2005]). The interested reader is referred to archival documents for further information.

The authors and redactors of the Book of Kings apparently made a selection in the material, just as many historians tend to do (for a methodical background for this approach to history writing, see B. Becking, “Ezra’s Reenactment of the Exile”, *Leading Captivity Captive. ‘The Exile’ as History and Ideology* [ed. L.L. Grabbe] [ESHM 2 = JSOTSup 278; Sheffield 1998] 40-61). They were probably of the opinion that the details regarding cultic activities were more pertinent to their worldview than other types of activity. With these references to the archives, they created a space of power: their view of the past was substantiated by official and trustworthy archives.

Hasler’s meandering style sometimes makes it difficult to understand her argument. The over-use of qualifying adverbs like “maybe” has the effect of putting the reader on the wrong foot. Nevertheless, the point she makes is convincing. Archives in Ezra-Nehemiah can be seen as spaces supporting the downtrodden community. In her treatment of Ezra 3–5, the complex story of the contested but nevertheless finished rebuilding of the temple, she refers to two archival interventions: the archive referenced in Ezra 4 supporting the view of the enemies of Yehud, and the archive mentioned in Ezra 6 as present in Ecbatana and containing a copy of the decree of Cyrus. While prescinding from the problem of judging the historical veracity of these reports, Hasler hints at an ambiguity: the two archives

seem to be contradictory. My question to her would be: Is that ambivalence not intended by the author of Ezra 3–5? In my view, the contradiction underscores the fact that Jerusalem and Samaria were already each other's antipole. Unfortunately, Hasler seems to have overlooked a third space in this story, which is not exactly of an archival character but functions in support of the downtrodden. The message of Haggai and Zechariah in Ezra 4 to continue building the temple can be construed as the result of their consulting a heavenly archive.

Hasler gives her readers much to think about. Although I think that the authors and redactors of Ezra-Nehemiah do not present an archive but only play with the concept, I am certain she has opened a completely new chapter in the history of the research on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Utrecht University
Faculty of Humanities
Achter de Dom 20
NL-3512 JP Utrecht
B.E.J.H.Becking@uu.nl

Bob BECKING

Jo CARRUTHERS, *The Politics of Purim*. Law, Sovereignty and Hospitality in the Aesthetic Afterlives of Esther (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 694, Scriptural Traces 25). London, T&T Clark, 2020. xi-208 p. 16 × 23. £85.00

Carruthers' monograph is divided into ten chapters preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion, bibliography, and several indexes. The indexes are useful and cover biblical references, authors and subjects. Whereas the bibliography is extensive and up to date, all but one title are in English; also, rather than original works the English translations are quoted.

The author reads the book of Esther, also referred to as Megillah (Scroll), through the lense of Purim and then applies this text to the current situation successfully. The main thesis of this book is that Purim is a political festival. Carruthers explores how the issues of law, sovereignty and hospitality are portrayed and interrelated in the Megillah. Thus, Carruthers reads Esther and its festival, Purim, with the help of political and aesthetic theories. In her reading of the text, Carruthers is aided by modern philosophers of law such as Giorgio Agamben, Walter Benjamin, and Jacques Derrida. Based on their views, she challenges the established interpretation of the story of Esther, while using convincingly alternative hermeneutical theories that further the traditional exegetical interpretation of biblical texts. She refers to those interpretations, the work of rabbinical tradition, and, in this way, she also shows a knowledge of some key exegetical points.

In the subsequent chapters Carruthers reviews the popularity of the story of Esther as witnessed in the many different works of art inspired by the Megillah. Along with illustrated manuscripts and pictorial representations from the medieval period, the main interpretation of this biblical text is given in the *Purimshpiln* or plays based on the story of Purim that adapt what is recounted in the book of Esther to current circumstances. These circumstances can be as varied as the persecution during Nazi times to an LGBTQ interpretation of this biblical story.

In a substantial introduction the author reviews the different aspects of the story of Esther and of Purim, which make them appealing for all generations. After summarising aspects of the story already studied by many scholars, the author is perspicacious in her treatment of those facets of the account which have never been treated before, namely, the Persian law as opposed to the Torah, the concepts of sovereignty, self-identity, and hospitality, especially as they highlight the relationships between people. Carruthers will go back to these themes repeatedly.

One cannot read Esther without reference to Purim which becomes the obvious hermeneutical key of the book of Esther. Purim, with its carnivalesque overtones, is the festival of the diaspora. Part of the festival is to identify and construct an enemy so that all the efforts are then made to fight it. Carruthers reflects also on the importance of re-enacting the ritual in the lives of those who take part in it, regardless of their personal engagement with it. Purim is also that time in which laws can be broken without fearing the consequences. This lawlessness imbues art and ritual, gastronomy and decor.

Among the behaviours endorsed by the celebration of Purim one finds those contrary to the stipulations of the Law, such as norms about drinking and cross-dressing — customs regulated from early Jewish times. These practices, while being examples of lawlessness, remain within some legal framework and respect the established sovereignty of the state as well as helping form a group identity. Carruthers successfully explores these sociological aspects of Purim.

Purim has often been interpreted in terms of the carnivalesque theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, but Carruthers convincingly criticises this view for not respecting all the aspects which are intrinsic to Purim. She favours Giorgio Agamben's proposal which accounts for all elements of both the book of Esther and the celebration of Purim. His ideas will be useful in the discussions of this book.

The well-established connection between the book of Esther and the Amalekites is interpreted in connection with the notions of hospitality and lawlessness. The Amalekites are guilty of not being hospitable because they did not help Israel at a time of need. Hence the law to kill Amalek becomes institutionalised lawlessness in the celebration of Purim. Furthermore, the Israelite is commanded to remember to forget Amalek. When the book of Esther is publicly read at Purim, the congregation reacts to the mention of Haman by refusing to engage, so to speak, with him. This ritual makes those who listen aware that the enemy cannot be entertained.

Another key for understanding these events is the common custom of suspending normal practices in a state of emergency. Accordingly, a situation of lawlessness is ratified in order to preserve lives. We could say that we are witnessing this at the moment. Carruthers makes a valid reflection on the tension between hospitality and preservation of one's life or race, as in the case of the Megillah.

A further way in which the text of Esther has been received and interpreted by subsequent generations is expressed in the illumination of the scroll of Esther from medieval times. Many homes treasure a copy of this scroll (Megillah). In this research, Carruthers studies how the image of the execution of Haman functions. This is the most popular image in the decorated scrolls, and the reader, as it were, is invited to dwell on this imagery. This illustration could be considered performative, in as much as it calls for a reaction from the viewers. Carruthers uses the work of the modern philosopher Jacques Ranciere in making this connection. The reaction produced is the upsetting of established hierarchies, namely, the

tyrannical rule of a monarch who consents to the extermination of a complete nation, even though the same monarch supports the Jews in their counterattack. The right reaction to a situation of hostility is the execution of those who caused such a situation. The book of Esther gives legitimacy to this attitude.

In the next two chapters, Carruthers explores the limitation of power, the state of being legal or royal as portrayed in the book of Esther, and the later interpretation of the *Purimshpiln*. The plays move away from a religious interpretation of the biblical text and must be read within the context which produced them. The Megillah portrays law as dangerous and laughable, whereas the plays reviewed by Carruthers present the relationship between the law and its political influence. Some of these plays emerged from socio-political circumstances which might echo the events portrayed in the book of Esther. Following current political theories, Carruthers distances life from the law as the sphere that functions outside the constraints of the law. Life without the constraints of unjust laws is necessary for the functioning of society and various groups within it, above all when those laws can be used to oppress or suppress entire sectors of society. This is an appealing argument as it gives an interpretation of the relationship between law and the preservation of the persecuted Jewish people.

Kingship and the holder of the office are ridiculed by the Megillah and by the *Purimshpiln*. One of these is taken up as a case study. According to political theorists, a sovereign has power over the law and sits outside its realm as the one who not only promulgates it but also makes sure it is put into practice. However, in the book of Esther this is not the case, because the law makes a claim over sovereignty and binds it so that the king is no longer free. Further authority is given to Haman who, as a bad ruler, exercises it in a dangerous way. The story of Esther points out the deficiencies of earthly rulers, while the celebration of Purim claims some sort of authority for the Jews.

The book of Esther gives an answer to the flaws of law and leadership in the practice of hospitality associated with Purim. This aspect is treated in the final three chapters of the monograph. While discussing the interpretation of the book of Esther in painting, Carruthers reviews aspects of hospitality. The giving out of presents (*shalach manos*) associated with Purim is a way of being hospitable and of extending friendships. According to some theories, hospitality works in two ways: on the one hand, hospitality requires generosity, and, on the other, hospitality leads to preserving oneself. This is seen in the book of Esther which can easily be seen in the light of Agamben's theories. Esther shows generosity in the banquets she prepares, but at the same time she exercises violence in order to save her people.

Carruthers opens chapter 9 focusing again on a painting, or rather an unusual representation of Mordecai in mourning. This painting, which was set on a chest of drawers commissioned by a newly married couple, leads to reflection on the status of the Jews in the empire, on the idea of thresholds, and on the significance of the public mourning of Mordecai. The laws of the empire mean that a prominent Jew like Mordecai is excluded from the centre of power because he follows the customs of his nation, namely, rendering his clothes, wailing, and mourning. Moreover, Carruthers interprets this behaviour from the perspective of political theory: it makes Mordecai take a political stand by staging a public protest at the door of the seat of government on behalf of his people who have been displaced.

In *The Politics of Purim*, Jo Carruthers joins those who interpret biblical texts, but she does it from different angles, such as reception history and the social sciences. Carruthers engages convincingly in a dialogue between the Hebrew text of Esther and political and legal theories. This monograph certainly makes a valid contribution to our understanding of why the book of Esther is so popular among many sectors of society.

Mater Ecclesiae College
St Mary's University
Waldegrave Rd
Twickenham TW1 4SX
fjavierruizortiz@gmail.com

Francisco-Javier RUIZ-ORTIZ

Arthur Jan KEEFER, *Proverbs 1–9 as an Introduction to the Book of Proverbs* (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 701). London, T&T Clark, 2020. x-205 p. 15.5 × 23. £85.00

The consensus among scholars is unanimous in considering Proverbs to be a “collection of collections”, of which the first (Proverbs 1–9) is the most recent. However, if we wish to understand the compositional structure of the book, it is necessary to address two questions discussed among scholars today: 1) Is Proverbs a unitary book? and 2) What function does the first collection serve in relation to the others? Arthur Jan Keefer’s recent study stands in the context of this debate. Specifically, the author offers us a new contribution about the function and role of Proverbs 1–9 in relation to the other collections.

The study is based on two methodological assumptions: 1) the first collection is the most recently compiled part, and 2) Proverbs 1–9 is an introduction to the entire book. While the first assumption needs no further explanation (since the consensus is almost complete), more attention needs to be paid to “why” and “how” Proverbs 1–9 should be understood as an introduction and not simply as one collection among others. A large part of the Introduction to Keefer’s study is dedicated to an exposition of the literary use of so-called “introductions” in wisdom literature, biblical literature, and extrabiblical texts. It is an overview that helps the reader to understand how in ancient literature introductions could have a didactic and proleptic function. They not only serve as a start to the narrative, but contain literary elements that are then developed in the continuation of the narration. Similarly, Proverbs 1–9 is also intended as a broad introduction, as there are key words or concepts that are taken up in the collections that follow. The author, for example, compares Prov 1,1-7 with Prov 10,1 – 22,16 to come to the conclusion that “the book contains interpretive challenges and at the same time contains an aid for addressing those challenges” (28).

To consider Proverbs 1–9 as an introduction means to put oneself, therefore, in the editorial history of Proverbs and to face the permanent tension between the synchronic and diachronic perspectives on the text. Already Saebø had pointed out the risk of a separate and disintegrated reading of the various collections (cf. Magne Saebø, “From Collection to Book — A New Approach to the History of Tradition and Redaction of the Book of Proverbs”, *Proceedings of*

the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies [eds. M. Goshen-Gottstein – D. Assaf] [Jerusalem 1988] 99-106). Equally, Keefer intends to address and move beyond the separate reading of Proverbs with the intent of helping to arrive at a more systematic view of how Proverbs 1–9 functions in relation to the other collections.

In the introductory pages, the author makes explicit the methodology of his work: he correlates the synchronic and diachronic visions of the text, reading the book in its final form. His aim is not to delve into the diachronic and detailed stratification of the various collections, but to read Proverbs as a unitary book in dialogue with the peculiar characteristics of each collection. According to the author, the first nine chapters were deliberately inserted at the opening of Proverbs with a very specific strategic purpose: didactic function. There is a unidirectional, and at the same time, reciprocal path between the first collection and the remaining collections. Proverbs 1–9 is, so to speak, an “exegetical insight” (35) of what specifically is displayed in the subsequent collections. At the same time, what may appear obscure and cryptic in some texts finds its clarification and interpretive orientation in Proverbs 1–9.

The author divides the research into three conceptual areas: character types, educational goals, and theological context. They represent three macrostructures through which the reader can better grasp the correlations between the parts and the peculiar role played by Proverbs 1–9.

The first chapter is dedicated to the examination of some of the character and moral traits present in Proverbs, which are often set in contrast, such as the pairs, wise/foolish or righteous/wicked. By means of a lexicographical analysis, Keefer shows how many of the lexemes present in Proverbs 1–9 are also present in later sections of the book. In general, there is a polarization between good and evil people. If, however, we compare Proverbs 1–9 with chapters 10–29, some more specific characterizations emerge. The characters in the introductory section are standardized, so to speak; there is in it a co-referentiality between the description and its identity, although it is not always quite so rigid. In other words, the description of the characters in Proverbs 1–9 remains at a general level, without any further concretization on the identification of the righteous/wicked or wise/foolish. This is not accidental. According to the author, this is an intentional literary strategy, which functions as a didactic preparation for what follows. In fact, in the later collections, more concrete types of people to be esteemed or blamed are described rather than standardized typologies. The introductory function of Proverbs 1–9 is to persuade the reader to follow the paternal instructions in a general way. Subsequent chapters then present exemplifications and concretizations of what is anticipated in the introduction.

Chapter three is dedicated to exploring the educational aspect of Proverbs. The author’s investigation focuses on certain moral values contained in the book. There is no systematic treatment of values in Proverbs, and this may cause the reader many obstacles to interpretation. Is it possible — asks the author — to glimpse common goals and identify correlations between the values listed in Proverbs? The author first identifies a certain “tension” in understanding them. A clear case of texts in tension can be seen by comparing Prov 22,1 with 16,16. In 16,16 wisdom is preferable to gold, while in 22,1 favor/name (חַסָּד) is preferable to gold. So, what correlation is there between wisdom and favor? And how should this be read within the framework of values contained in Proverbs? Keefer investigates

the lemma **חש** in the introductory section of Proverbs; that term is found in the opening chapters (chapter 2) and in the final part of the first collection (chapters 7–8). Keefer comes to the same conclusions found on the inquiry concerning character types. Proverbs 1–9 offers a general framework and a teleological scheme in which there is a consequentiality between the introductory part and what is said in 16,16 and 22,1. If in Proverbs 1–9 the favor/name refers to the wise man who accepts his father's teaching in relationship to the Lord, it follows that the two texts of the Solomonic collection receive greater light when reread from the perspective presented in the introductory part: Proverbs 1–9 creates a structure and hierarchy of values aimed at wisdom, acceptance of his father's teaching, and relationship to the Lord. The tensions encountered in later collections fit into this value context. However, this is not always the case. For example, Agur's prayer (Prov 30,1-9) is nothing more than an echo of the failure of what is described in Prov 1,2-7. The tension, then, persists.

The last chapter focuses on the theological dimension of Proverbs. The author examines the texts and material concerning the lexicography on God, dividing them into three categories: human attitudes toward God; the supremacy of wisdom and its sovereignty; and the divine perspective and its evaluation. In the first collection, the reasons for relying on God are stated and the conception of wisdom as a mediator between God and humans emerges. In Prov 16,9, human projects are spoken of and juxtaposed with what the Lord accomplishes. Now, that juxtaposition is channeled and resolved in light of Proverbs 1–9. Again, Proverbs 1–9 represents a kind of orientation and reorientation, not only to address textual tensions and juxtapositions, but also to resolve some juxtapositions that at the exegetical level seem insoluble. In conclusion, Proverbs 1–9 has a didactic function, which does not impose a unilateral and exclusive interpretation. On the contrary, if we assume the axiom that Proverbs 1–9 is an introduction to the whole book, the interpretation itself takes on nuances and expansions of unthinkable perspectives.

Keefer's study is certainly an innovative contribution to the understanding of Proverbs as a unitary book. In my opinion, the question remains open as to whether to understand the first collection as an introduction *tout court*. As the author himself shows, introductions in biblical and Near Eastern literature contain thematic references and developments and are relatively brief. In contrast, in Proverbs the introduction covers a span of nine chapters. There is no real thematic development, but a "didactic" exemplification and concretization of what is generally presented in Proverbs 1–9. Keefer's study has the merit of resolving some hermeneutical inconsistencies between the collections, proposing the first collection as the exegetical key. This was accomplished by using three conceptual categories that run through the book (character types, education, theology). But we know that Proverbs is composed of macro and micro literary units: what function does the introduction serve with respect to all of this? Keefer's research has the great merit of being an opener for further research concerning the unity of Proverbs, with which the Proverbs scholar must deal. It is an original and valuable contribution.

Novum Testamentum

Helen K. BOND, *The First Biography of Jesus. Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2020. xiii-317 p. 15,25 × 22,50. \$42.99

H.K. Bond, bibliste et historienne renommée, spécialiste des origines chrétiennes, enseignante à Edinburgh, vient de publier un essai lumineux dont le but premier n'est pas tant de montrer que Marc est la première biographie (en grec, βίος) écrite sur Jésus — ce qui est aujourd'hui admis par une majorité de chercheurs —, mais de déterminer ce que cela change pour l'interprétation (12, répété 37). Le livre est composé de 6 chapitres.

Le premier (15-37) retrace de façon claire et exhaustive le débat sur le genre de Marc, de la fin du début du II^e siècle à aujourd'hui — avec la deuxième édition du *What Are the Gospels?* de R.A. Brurridge.

Le ch. 2 (38-77), rappelant que Marc a les caractéristiques des *bioi* anciens, reprend avec la même clarté l'histoire de ces *bioi*, de leur émergence progressive du IV^e avant notre ère au 1^{er} siècle de notre ère. Elle souligne avec raison que, dans l'antiquité, les genres étaient poreux et flexibles, entre *encomium* et *bios*, entre *bios* et historiographie, et que les *bioi* anciens sont d'une infinie variété (45). Elle indique au passage que ces *bioi* ne s'intéressent pas aux événements pour eux-mêmes, mais qu'ils choisissent leurs personnages pour ce qu'ils représentent moralement: loyauté, courage, modération et leurs opposés (52). Elle poursuit en signalant que «de tous les événements de la vie d'une personne, celui qui fascina le plus les (anciens) biographes fut la mort» (56), car elle est «indicateur suprême de l'*ethos* d'un homme» (61). Cela explique l'importance de ces récits sur la mort de leurs protagonistes. L'auteure note aussi que, même si le sujet des *bioi* anciens est historique, cela ne signifie pas que les biographes étaient intéressés à l'exactitude des événements pour eux-mêmes: il y a un certain degré de fiction dans les *bioi* anciens, car on fait dire aux protagonistes ce qu'on attendait qu'un grand homme dise. Revenant sur la diversité des *bioi* anciens, Bond signale la vie d'Ésope comme type de biographie populaire, qui n'était pas fait pour les élites, mais visait un public large, cultivé ou non. Des traits précédemment relevés, en particulier ceux à imiter (la majorité), elle note que Marc en a beaucoup en commun avec les *bioi* des philosophes (76). Elle se demande également si les récits évangéliques, et Marc en particulier, ont été influencés par les *bioi* juifs antérieurs ou contemporains. Après avoir noté que la *Vie de Moïse* par Philon est sans doute la plus proche, elle distingue avec raison entre le contenu, qui reflète des influences bibliques évidentes, surtout eu égard à la typologie, et le genre, qui s'apparente aux *bioi* gréco-romains (29). Et elle ajoute plus loin (90-91), que si la forme *bios* était «immensément populaire dans le monde romain, elle était étrangement rare dans les cercles juifs».

Le ch. 3 (78-120) présente Marc comme biographe, en sa compétence, son intention et ses techniques. L'étude du récit ne permet pas de dire que son auteur — car il s'agit bien d'un auteur et non d'un compilateur — a atteint le plus haut niveau des *progymnasmata*, mais qu'il connaît et maîtrise les techniques grecques, en particulier la *synkrisis*, dont on a jusqu'à présent fait peu état (86). Quant à

l'intention, on peut dire que, comme *bios*, Marc immortalise la mémoire de Jésus et fait de sa vie et de son enseignement un monument littéraire (92), et qu'il fut écrit pour que les croyants trouvent en Jésus un modèle, mais aussi leur propre identité. Cela dit, si Marc est d'abord écrit pour les communautés, il s'adresse aussi à un public plus large, comme l'ont déjà montré un certain nombre d'exégètes. Eu égard à sa composition, Bond reconnaît qu'il est «plutôt mieux composé que bien des biographies» de l'époque (101). Et si, dans le passé, on a décrié la nature épisodique des Synoptiques, l'auteure montre que le récit épisodique facilite la lecture en communauté (105), les péripécies, relativement indépendantes et brèves, étant faites pour être rapidement comprises et mémorisées. Enfin, elle n'évite pas l'objection faite souvent à l'hypothèse d'un Marc *bios*, à savoir l'absence de préface (115-120). On a expliqué ce manque en disant (i) que Marc ne se reconnaît pas vraiment comme l'unique ou le principal auteur du récit qu'il publie, lequel serait l'œuvre de sa communauté, et qu'il se verrait plutôt comme un éditeur, (ii) ou qu'il procède à la manière des narrateurs bibliques, tous anonymes — hypothèse d'Oda Wischmeyer (117-118), (iii) ou encore, à la différence de ceux, nombreux, qui cherchaient alors la gloire par l'écriture, qu'il refuse de se mettre en valeur (119). Au demeurant, l'absence de préface (même chose chez Diogène Laërce) n'enlève rien au caractère biographique de Marc. À la page 106 Bond répète qu'il faut lire Marc comme un produit fini et non comme un collage et une compilation.

Le ch. 4 (121-166) traite de la caractérisation de Jésus. Bond commence par rappeler que Marc décrit son protagoniste moins par le *telling* (du narrateur) que par le *showing*, qui permet au lecteur de mieux connaître les personnages (121). Elle rappelle aussi (122) que Marc ne prétend pas tout dire, loin de là, et que vaut pour son récit la déclaration de Plutarque selon qui ce ne sont pas les actions les plus illustres qui manifestent nécessairement la vertu ou le vice d'un personnage (*Vie d'Alexandre* 1,2-3). Il importe de choisir ce qui est plus représentatif. Et comme manque en Marc la partie des *bioi* d'alors consacrée au *genos* — l'absence de détails sur la famille, la naissance et l'enfance —, Bond rappelle (126) que ces informations manquent aussi dans plusieurs *bioi* anciens (entre autres, les *Memoabilia* de Xénophon). L'origine humble permet aussi de montrer comment le protagoniste doit sa notoriété à ses seuls mérites. Et elle ajoute que si Marc ne parle ni de la famille — en particulier du père —, ni de la naissance, c'est parce que, en 1,11, il révèle que Dieu est le père de Jésus, ce qui explique évidemment l'absence de mention d'un père humain (138-139). Elle montre aussi avec raison que, comme dans les *bioi* anciens où la mise à l'épreuve du héros était un motif fréquent, on retrouve l'équivalent dans l'épisode des tentations de Jésus (134). Elle montre peu à peu comment Marc décrit un Jésus refusant un messianisme triomphaliste et qui, pour cela, fait que sa Passion et sa mort vont être en accord avec ce qu'il fut durant son ministère. Il ne s'agissait plus seulement, comme durant les années qui suivirent la mort/résurrection de Jésus, d'affronter la question d'une mort ignominieuse, mais de présenter une vie se donnant comme modèle, et une mort consonnant avec la vie qui l'avait précédée. Dès lors, l'écriture de la vie, autrement dit du ministère de Jésus, donnait au lecteur la possibilité d'imiter son maître jusque dans les épreuves et les persécutions. On peut ainsi dire que Marc a créé une identité du disciple essentiellement colorée par celle du maître.

Au ch. 5 (167-221), Bond présente la caractérisation des autres personnages, en particulier des disciples. à partir des mêmes critères: Marc montre (*shows*) plus

qu'il ne dit (*tells*) sur les autres personnages, qui sont là pour mettre en valeur les qualités et les choix de Jésus.

Le ch. 6 (222-252) affronte l'énigme principale, celle de la mort de Jésus. Mais comme le dit l'auteure, le biographe aurait pu décrire cette mort en quelques paragraphes. Or, il en fait un récit détaillé et long, en particulier pour les derniers moments précédant la mort, au point que c'est le plus long récit de l'antiquité que nous ayons d'une crucifixion. La mort de Jésus n'est pas décrite par Marc comme une mort noble: c'est la mort d'un esclave roué de coups, moqué et offensé, d'un homme totalement désolé et abandonné (227-229). Mais ce faisant, le biographe veut montrer que Jésus a eu la mort qu'il avait annoncée, une mort conforme à ce qu'il avait voulu être durant sa vie, humble, allant au-devant des méprisés et des abandonnés, participant ainsi «aux profondeurs de la souffrance humaine» (235). La thèse de Bond, répétée plusieurs fois au cours des analyses, est que Jésus eut la même mort que les philosophes, obéissant à Dieu et fidèle à son enseignement. Sa mort fut «une extension de sa vie» (250): et «comme un bon philosophe, il meurt en accord avec son enseignement» (255). Si le récit de la Passion et de la mort de Jésus est si long en Marc, c'est parce que, partant de la mort vécue exemplairement, le biographe a construit le reste de son récit en conformité avec elle (redit 255). Bond rejoint ainsi l'opinion de Kähler, qui, au tout début du XX^e, avait dit que Marc 1-13 avait été écrit après Marc 14-16 et en était l'introduction. Enfin, même si, à propos du récit des femmes au tombeau, en 16,1-8, elle montre que le récit est complet, l'auteure reconnaît qu'aucun *bios* ancien ne finit de manière aussi insatisfaisante (251).

Par ses analyses fines et dans l'ensemble très pertinentes, Bond montre bien (i) que Marc a les caractéristiques d'un *bios* ancien, (ii) que le biographe n'en est pas qu'un compilateur, (iii) que reconnaître en Marc un véritable *bios* change l'interprétation qui en fut jusque récemment donnée.

De ce brillant essai venons-en au seul point faible concernant la Passion et la mort de Jésus, qui ne diminue d'ailleurs pas la valeur de la démonstration. Bond répète plusieurs fois, ai-je dit, que la mort de Jésus fut celle des philosophes fidèles jusqu'au bout à leur enseignement. Qu'il y ait une réelle cohérence entre le comportement de Jésus durant sa vie et celui durant sa Passion, c'est une évidence, au demeurant essentielle. Mais comment expliquer que le récit marcie de la Passion suive continûment et fidèlement, jusqu'au dernier cri, les motifs des psaumes des innocents persécutés. À la page 233, l'auteure déclare: «Il importe de noter que Marc ne dit pas que Jésus était *innocent*». Affirmation qui va contre ce qu'elle a auparavant exposé, à savoir que Marc le biographe ne dit pas (*telling*) ce qu'il montre (*showing*). Car, comme je l'ai montré dans mon essai *The Birth of the Gospels as Biographies* (AnBib Studia 10; Rome 2017), qu'elle n'a manifestement pas lu, chacun des épisodes de la Passion en Marc (et Matthieu qui le suit) fait écho à un motif des supplications des innocents injustement persécutés. Si Jésus a la mort des philosophes, pourquoi Marc le présente-t-il comme un juste qui demande des comptes à son Dieu qui l'a apparemment abandonné? La question est alors: à quoi sert la typologie des supplications des innocents persécutés?

Dans l'essai dont je viens de parler, j'ai ainsi montré que les premiers disciples devaient un jour ou l'autre écrire des *bioi*, car c'était pour eux la seule façon de prouver que Jésus était illustre et qu'il devait être reconnu comme tel. Voilà pourquoi les trois Synoptiques durent faire en sorte que, dans leurs récits et par les personnages de leurs récits, Jésus fût objet d'une *anagnôrisis* (ou d'un

anagnôrismos) finale, malgré sa mort en croix. Le défi devait être d'autant plus accepté qu'un *bios* était le seul moyen de présenter exhaustivement Jésus aussi bien à ceux qui croyaient en lui et ne l'avaient pas connu avant sa mort (*ad intra*), qu'à ceux qui le rejetaient et propageaient des erreurs graves à son sujet (*ad extra*), pour les corriger. Cela explique la présence d'un fond apologétique en chacun de ces récits, qui les distingue des *bioi* d'un Plutarque ou d'un Suétone, qui n'avaient pas besoin de prouver qu'un Alexandre ou un César étaient des grands hommes. Car, en écrivant des *bioi*, Plutarque et les autres biographes ne visent pas seulement à dire la vérité sur leurs protagonistes, ni à décrire un itinéraire politique, social, psychologique ou spirituel, mais un personnage en qui se manifestent ambition et succès, vices et vertus, raison et déraison, force et faiblesse, etc. La raison d'être des *bioi* varie selon les protagonistes: éloge, imitation, exhortation, conversion, vie inspirée par des valeurs supérieures, etc. Bref, les *bioi* d'alors s'intéressent autant au personnage qu'à ce qu'il représente. Chez les Synoptiques, la raison d'être première des *bioi* est de montrer que, loin d'empêcher une *anagnôrisis*, la mort ignominieuse de Jésus en croix l'appelle plutôt. Et j'ai montré que, paradoxalement, le recours aux supplications des innocents persécutés avait permis à Marc de ne pas avoir besoin d'une *anagnôrisis* horizontale, humaine, mais seulement divine. Cet enjeu étant rappelé, je ne puis que redire tout le bien que je pense de l'essai de H.K. Bond.

Pontifical Biblical Institute (Rome)
Piazza della Pilotta 35
I-00187 Roma
jnaletti@biblico.it

Jean-Noël ALETTI

Eduard KÄFER, *Die Rezeption der Sinaitradition im Evangelium nach Johannes* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 502). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2019. xiv-479 p. 15,5 × 23. €104,00

Si tratta di una dissertazione discussa alla Georg-August-Universität di Göttingen nel 2017, Doktorvater F. Wilk. Siamo di fronte a una indagine di tipo intertestuale: un approccio sempre più praticato negli ultimi decenni nell'esegesi non solo giovannea. Questo lavoro s'interessa della recezione giovannea delle Scritture di Israele, tenendo conto delle tradizioni interpretative proto-giudaiche, nella consapevolezza che sul QV pende l'accusa di antiggiudaismo. L'indagine prescinde da qualunque problematica di tipo diacronico: il c. 6 viene semplicemente assegnato alla sezione delle controversie (cc. 5–10).

Con «tradizione del Sinai» l'A. intende il racconto della rivelazione di Dio al Sinai con la consegna della legge mediante Mosè, trasmessa — e perciò sempre già anche interpretata — nella Scrittura e nel proto-giudaismo (1). Scopo del lavoro è indagare *in che misura* e *per quale scopo* la tradizione del Sinai è recepita in Giovanni (7). Ciò promette di offrire una migliore comprensione della relazione che, per il QV, esiste tra la storia di Dio con Israele e la storia di Gesù Cristo.

Dal punto di vista contenutistico con intertestualità «deve essere compreso l'insieme delle relazioni di un testo T a un altro testo / ad altri testi t1...n, in modo

tale che il messaggio del testo T, in quanto ipertesto, si forma anche attraverso riferimenti alla dimensione sintattica e/o semantica e/o pragmatica con i t1...n in quanto ipotesti» (12). L'A. adotta un modello di lettura intertestuale che distingue tre fasi: «disintegrazione» (il lettore modello / implicito viene distolto dalla sua normale e lineare direzione di lettura attraverso un preciso segnale, un contrassegno [*Markierung*], che appare come un «disturbo co-testuale»); «digressione» (al lettore viene facilitata l'identificazione dei pre-testi); «reintegrazione» (il lettore considera i pre-testi identificati e giunge a una più profonda interpretazione del testo di partenza). L'anello di congiunzione tra il testo che si ha davanti e il testo di riferimento è chiamato da Käfer «iscrizione (o traccia) intertestuale» (15). In presenza di un contrassegno solo implicito, la possibilità di riconoscere il rimando intertestuale dipende dal grado di coincidenza dell'orizzonte culturale dell'interprete con quello dell'autore (22-23): occorre pertanto rendersi familiari con la tradizione del Sinai nella Scrittura e nel (proto-)giudaismo.

Nel QV non compare alcuna citazione del racconto del Sinai. Un riferimento intertestuale alla tradizione del Sinai esplicitamente contrassegnato si trova, tuttavia, già nel prologo (Gv 1,14-18). Ulteriori riferimenti compaiono nella polemica contro «i giudei» in Gv 5,37-38, nel racconto del miracolo dei pani con relativo discorso in Gv 6,32 e, infine, nel discorso di difesa di Gesù in Gv 10,35-36. In questi ultimi due casi il riferimento al Sinai si trova come interpretazione della Scrittura, in connessione con una precedente citazione della stessa (cf. 6,31 e 10,34).

Tralasciando il primo (Introduzione) e l'ultimo (Sintesi dei risultati e conclusioni), i quattro capitoli che formano il corpo centrale del lavoro sono strutturati allo stesso modo: disintegrazione, digressione, reintegrazione. Per poter descrivere con la necessaria precisione ciò che la disintegrazione fa scattare nella lettura, l'A. offre una prima analisi — ancora provvisoria, ma già piuttosto dettagliata — dell'argomentazione giovannea all'interno del segmento di testo individuato (primo passaggio). Nel terzo passaggio (reintegrazione) il testo di partenza viene di nuovo interpretato alla luce delle conoscenze ottenute nella fase intermedia (digressione). Nel lavoro di Käfer la digressione si sviluppa propriamente in due tappe: dapprima vengono identificati i pre-testi e poi vengono redatte delle tabelle di «echi e corrispondenze». Nel caso del c. 6 questa fase centrale poi viene sdoppiata, in ragione della presenza di due distinte iscrizioni intertestuali (6,31 e 6,45).

È il racconto del secondo dono della legge, dopo il peccato di Israele (Esodo 32-34), che si lascia identificare come pre-testo di Gv 1,14-18. Al v. 17a si fa esplicito riferimento al dono della legge per mezzo di Mosè (cf. Esodo 19-20): a questa iscrizione intertestuale esplicitamente contrassegnata si accompagna, però, nei vv. 14-18, una serie di curiose formulazioni, a essa strettamente collegate, che orientano il lettore in direzione di Esodo 32-34: con l'espressione «porre la tenda» si descrive l'incarnazione in relazione all'attendarsi di Dio — cioè del suo nome — in Israele (Es 33,7); la visione della gloria dei testimoni oculari è collegata con la visione della gloria da parte di Mosè (Es 33,18-22); in quanto «pieno di grazia e di verità» Gesù Cristo è colui che porta il nome di Dio (Es 34,6-7); come le tavole di pietra erano una testimonianza permanente (32,15), così lo è pure Giovanni Battista; grazie al messia Gesù noi tutti abbiamo ricevuto ciò che un tempo fu concesso solo a Mosè (34,9; 33,12-17), cioè la grazia. La grazia della figliolanza divina supera e compie la grazia che soltanto Mosè trovò davanti a Dio.

Il secondo riferimento alla tradizione del Sinai si trova in Gv 5,37-38. Quando e dove il Padre ha dato una testimonianza nel passato (cf. il perfetto di *martyreō* al v. 37a) a favore di Gesù, come suo Figlio inviato, tale che essa possieda ancora validità nel presente del racconto? Secondo l'A. questo passaggio presuppone «una conoscenza della tradizione sinottica del battesimo» (123). La dichiarazione negativa di 5,37b (*non* vedere la figura del Padre) ha un tono polemico: il testo intende negare una (implicita) rivendicazione dei giudei. Si deve poi ipotizzare che «la sua parola» (5,38a) vada identificata con la parola di Dio che ci fu al Sinai (la Torah): siamo dunque davanti a una allusione *esplicitamente* contrassegnata a Esodo 19–20 e 24. Ne deriva per il lettore una frattura nella ricezione, sicché egli deve attivare la sua conoscenza intertestuale, per comprendere il testo in modo ottimale. Per il Gesù giovanneo, il Padre suo si è rivelato al suo popolo al Sinai; questa rivelazione è accessibile mediante la Torah. E il Padre si è rivelato a Gesù e ne ha attestato l'identità come Figlio inviato, quando gli ha fatto udire la sua voce e gli ha fatto vedere la sua figura e gli ha dato la sua parola nell'evento del battesimo. La rivelazione del Sinai e, con essa, la Torah stanno dunque in continuità con la rivelazione di Dio in Gesù Cristo. Questa rappresenta in ogni caso il momento culminante all'interno di questa continuità.

A proposito di Giovanni 6 l'A. individua una connessione strettissima tra le due iscrizioni intertestuali: il riferimento alla manna in 6,31 e quello all'insegnamento escatologico di Dio in 6,45. Esse si illuminano a vicenda. Se il Salmo 77 LXX citato in 6,31 non consente di collegare manna e Torah, ciò risulta invece possibile in altri passi del TM e della LXX, oltre che nell'interpretazione filoniana dell'episodio della manna e in quelle (proto-)giudaiche. In base alle possibilità ermeneutiche dischiuse dagli «echi e corrispondenze» individuati, Käfer arriva alla conclusione che il Gesù giovanneo in Gv 6,32 non parla del pane-manna, ma del pane-Torah: il «pane dal cielo» rappresenta una indicazione per la Parola/rivelazione/verità di Dio. Riferendosi a Mosè e a ciò che egli ha fatto, Gesù allude al Sinai e alla Torah. Egli dichiara ai suoi interlocutori che non Mosè ha dato loro il pane dal cielo (cioè la rivelazione/sapienza), che per essi coincide con la Torah. Più avanti (vv. 45-46) egli esprime, in connessione con una citazione dai profeti (Is 53,13) un consenso veterotestamentario e proto-giudaico che deriva dalla tradizione del Sinai, secondo cui nessuno mai ha visto Dio: nessuno, neppure Mosè. L'istruzione immediata di Dio, il Padre, si dà quindi soltanto nella mediazione del Figlio che è da Dio ed è egli stesso la verità.

L'ultimo riferimento giovanneo alla tradizione del Sinai si trova in Gv 10,34-36. La relativa contenuta nell'apodosi (v. 36 «colui che il Padre ha consacrato e mandato nel mondo») corrisponde a quella che si trova nella protasi (v. 35 «coloro per i quali ci fu la parola di Dio»). La protasi e l'apodosi pongono in relazione l'esserci della parola di Dio e la consacrazione e invio di Gesù da parte del Padre. Per l'A. il riferimento alla consacrazione di Gesù contiene un rimando alla scena del battesimo: è lì che si chiarisce chi è l'unto/consacrato, cioè il Cristo. Ma chi sono questi «dèi», cioè coloro per i quali ci fu la parola di Dio? Si tratta di Israele al Sinai, preso nel suo complesso. La frase relativa del v. 35 («per i quali ci fu la Parola di Dio») ha un significato collaterale di tipo causale (*siccome* per loro ci fu la Parola di Dio, essi furono detti dèi). Al Sinai gli israeliti giunsero a una speciale vicinanza con Dio per il fatto che essi furono i destinatari della parola di Dio. Il titolo «dèi» si lega all'elezione di Israele come proprietà di Dio, al suo essere popolo santo e alla sua condizione sacerdotale. All'esserci della

parola di Dio per «quelli», corrisponde la santificazione e invio di Gesù nel mondo. Il Gesù giovanneo non si mette a confronto con gli israeliti al Sinai, quanto piuttosto con la parola di Dio che ci fu per loro.

Il ricorso alla tradizione del Sinai sta, pertanto, al centro della presentazione giovannea di Gesù. In Gv 1,14-18 le allusioni intertestuali a Esodo 32-34 servono a descrivere l'identità di Gesù Cristo in relazione a Mosè e alla legge, ma soprattutto al Dio di Israele e alla sua rivelazione al Sinai. Negli altri passi i riferimenti alla tradizione del Sinai rendono possibile caratterizzarla come testimonianza per Gesù Cristo.

Il testo di Käfer procede in modo chiaro e i frequenti paragrafi di sintesi sono redatti in modo eccellente. La modalità con cui il QV si rapporta alle Scritture di Israele e alla tradizione interpretativa proto-giudaica è descritto in modo convincente. Käfer prende le distanze da autori come Theobald che vedono nel QV un approccio sostitutivo rispetto a Israele: la rivelazione sinaitica resta per Giovanni un elemento centrale della storia della salvezza e non c'è discontinuità tra la rivelazione sinaitica e quella cristologica. Dal punto di vista delle scelte espositive ci pare che nell'elencare «echi e corrispondenze» l'A. potrebbe procedere in modo più sobrio, tralasciando i contatti linguistici che non hanno di fatto rilevanza per interpretare i passi giovannei. Per quanto riguarda le tabelle sinottiche sarebbe stato di maggior aiuto per il lettore trovare nella colonna di sinistra il testo giovanneo di partenza invece del pre-testo, perché di fatto l'A. ordina i pre-testi in base alla sequenza dei versetti giovannei. Dal punto di vista del contenuto riteniamo che alcuni dei punti che qualificano l'esegesi proposta dell'A. al momento della «reintegrazione», meritino attenta considerazione senza essere, peraltro, del tutto inoppugnabili: che proprio Esodo 32-34, piuttosto che Esodo 19-20; 24, rappresenti il pre-testo di Gv 1,14-17; che in Gv 5,37b-38a affiori la tradizione sinottica del battesimo di Gesù; che ci sia in 6,32 un riferimento al dono della Torah piuttosto che della manna; che il ragionamento svolto in 10,34-36 ponga in parallelo non Gesù e gli israeliti, ma Gesù e la parola rivolta da Dio agli israeliti al Sinai.

Piazzale G. Bacchelli, 4
I-40136 Bologna
maurizio.marcheselli@fiter.it

Maurizio MARCHESELLI

Mark GRUNDEKEN, *Der eine Gott, der durch alle ist*. Epheser 4,6 im Kontext antiker Diskurse über Gott und die Welt (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 445). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2020. ix-278 p. 15,5 × 23. €124,00

After his doctoral dissertation (*Community Building in the Shepherd of Hermas. A Critical Study of Some Key Aspects* [SVigChr 131; Leiden 2015]) and two co-edited works (*Ancient Christian Interpretations of "Violent Texts" in the Apocalypse* [NTOA/StUNT 92; Göttingen 2011]; *Early Christian Communities between Ideal and Reality* [WUNT 342; Tübingen 2015]), this is Mark Grundeken's (hereafter MG) second scholarly monograph. This study is a reworked version of MG's *Habilitationsschrift* presented at the Faculty of Theology of Albert-Ludwigs-Universität (Breisgau).

This research deals with the question of how the expression διὰ πάντων is to be understood in Eph 4,6b. The first exegetical problem is whether πάντων is masculine (referring to the believers) or neuter (referring to the cosmos), and whether the meaning of the “πᾶς-expressions” is consistent along the passage (ὁ [θεός] ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν). The second regards the connotation of God’s uniqueness and fatherhood in Eph 4,6a, as well as its consequences in the immediate context. MG notices that the prepositional wordplay (ἐπί, διά, ἐν), relating God and all things, is not found elsewhere in the Pauline literature, nor in the NT. He acknowledges that some authors consider Rom 11,36, 1 Cor 8,6 and Col 1,16 to be parallel texts to Eph 4,6 (see, for example, Dibelius [1927]); however, he points out that these texts do not report the prepositional combination διὰ πάντων *ad litteram*, nor reflect the same ecclesiological set of ideas.

MG’s research concerns the use and content of διὰ πάντων in Greek and Jewish Hellenistic literature. Studying some texts from different philosophical traditions (Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and Judaism), MG discovers essential points of contact (*wesentliche Berührungspunkte*), either vocabulary or ideas, with Eph 4,6. First, MG examines these texts for meaningful elements to clarify the idea of God [who is] διὰ πάντων. Second, MG makes clear that the relationship between Ephesians and these texts is not generative; similarities and overlapping content in their formulations take place within a certain philosophical, cultural tradition (*Traditionsraum*). Third, MG seeks to demonstrate that the editor of Ephesians (*Verfasser*) associated traditional cosmo-theological vocabulary in an ecclesiological manner, interpreting the unity of the church as a result of the divine order. Fourth, MG recognizes that Ephesians must be situated in a cultural, spiritual milieu, which must be understood in the light of some philosophical notions. MG adopts an interdisciplinary approach; his monograph seeks to establish interdisciplinary bridges between the history of religions, the history of philosophy, historical philology, as well as the history of the cultures and their thought. His approach involves a conceptual comparative analysis of ancient sources that deal with God or divine activity and their relationships. MG’s main thesis is that Eph 4,6 deals with a cosmo-theological representation (i.e., a philosophical-religious discourse) of the relationship between God and the world. This discourse is also ecclesiological; it relates God’s action and participation in the church, for God’s work pervades all believers.

MG’s monograph is composed of nine chapters, distributed in two main parts, ending with a conclusion and perspectives. The first part contains a large introduction (1-148) in which MG reviews the history of interpretation of the last century (from 1915 to 2017) and the most relevant interpretations of Eph 4,6 (ecclesiological or cosmological readings). MG’s thorough survey, which includes all the commentaries in modern European languages (German, Dutch, English, French, Italian, among others), focuses on the interpretation of the prepositional wordplay in Eph 4,6b, the biblical and non-biblical parallels adopted to explain διὰ πάντων, the explanation of God’s fatherhood, and the unity of the cosmos and of the church. MG’s systematic review of the history of interpretation in the last century leads him to conclude that there is no scholarly consensus about the meaning and sense of διὰ πάντων in Eph 4,6. This also confirms the need to look for the meaning of the expression in the popular philosophy and the cultural milieu that surrounded Ephesians and its *Verfasser*. The first part of the monograph ends with MG’s research proposal.

The second part contains MG's analysis of the parallel words and similar concepts in some lines of the *Carmen Aureum* of Pythagoras, in some works of Plutarch, in *De mundo* of Pseudo-Aristotle, in the Hymn to Zeus of Cleanthes (Stoicism), and in some texts of Philo. This order does not reflect a historical interest but an impulse from the studied concepts, namely the texts in which God or the divinity rules or pervades everything.

MG considers plausible, for example, that v. 51 of the Golden Verses might be read as a statement of one common σύστασις between divinities and humankind, which pervades and rules everything. The Golden Verses and Eph 4,6 have common ideas regarding God's fatherhood, and kinship between God and humankind. They also share the relationship between the *imitatio Dei* and the instability of humankind. However, the relationship between both texts cannot be understood as one of dependance. One can admit though that both evoke a common *topos* from which they derive similar ideas.

MG's comparison of Eph 4,6 and Plutarch's works shows some lexical and conceptual convergences. Plutarch does not say that God is διὰ πάντων but states that the divinity rules everything. For Plutarch, the divine δύναμις, the divine νοῦς, and the divine ψυχή are διὰ πάντων. God himself is transcendent, but the divinity is immanent. Plutarch and Ephesians do not stress that God or the divinity rules everything, but they hold, for example, that God is one and is the father who sustains creation and its order. Both relate the unity to a collectivity. MG explains that despite the convergences, the texts are independent of each other.

MG's analysis of Ephesians and *De mundo* shows that the divinity — either the divine δύναμις or God the father — is διὰ πάντων; however, in Ephesians that concerns the believers, while in *De mundo* it concerns everything. In both texts God is auctor / creator, order maker, and sustainer of all. The divinity is present in everything and everyone. God is the one who is oriented towards the world. Oppositions between human or cosmic spheres are considered constitutive of unity, and God ensures the unity in the plurality. In both texts human intelligence can understand the divine purpose. These similarities then indicate that both texts rework a common cosmo-theological tradition.

MG discovers likely associations between Eph 4,6 and the Hymn to Zeus (HZ). The expression "God's λόγος rules διὰ πάντων and διὰ παντός" in HZ constitutes an essential point of contact with Eph 4,6. Other common ideas are: God ensures the unity in the cosmic and human spheres. In both texts one may find some tensions between the already and the not yet. In both texts one may also find references to humankind as the μιμητής (Ephesians) and μίμημα (HZ) of God, and the notion that humankind may deviate from the divine plan. One must admit that both authors have reworked a common tradition, expounding continuous topics.

MG's analysis of Philo discloses some features in common with Eph 4,6, namely, divine superiority, divine uniqueness and universal fatherhood (πατήρ πάντων). From that MG concludes that the source of the expressions εἷς θεός, πατήρ πάντων, ἐπὶ πάντων, and ἐν πᾶσιν (like διὰ πάντων too) is not necessarily Pauline. Some of these elements might come from Philo or from Hellenistic Judaism. One can observe that some shared ideas by Philo and Ephesians were borrowed from a common and larger tradition, and were used in their own way, in their own theological discourses.

MG's thorough study of the above-mentioned authors demonstrates that the *Verfasser* of Ephesians associated a general formulation (originally referring to a philosophical motive) to the church. This ecclesiological perspective can be deduced from the context itself of Ephesians 4, which deals with the unity of the members of the church. The *Verfasser* connected this ecclesiological theme and the cosmological vocabulary to clarify that any division in the church may be considered a violation of the divine order. The philosophical vocabulary in Ephesians 4, in fact, makes it possible for the reader to distinguish how this ecclesiological interpretation may have resulted from reworked theological and cosmo-philosophical notions.

Some scholars may raise the issue about the Ephesians' *Verfasser* construction, whether his reworking of a common tradition was conscious or unconscious. MG believes that though the *Verfasser* might have used common topics unconsciously, the addressee may (or should) be aware of the relationship between Eph 4,6 and the ancient philosophical religious discourses. Thus, MG concludes that the editor could have used a conscious strategy (230). Such awareness belongs to the modern reader, but can it be equally attributed to the NT scribe? MG states that the exegesis *per definitionem* is historical-critical exegesis; he makes a great effort to individuate the possible tradition behind Eph 4,6. Nonetheless, he should recognize, first of all, that this "reworking" is only plausible, and second, that the historical reconstruction cannot do without a discourse-interconnected (*diskursvernetzte*) study. Despite the general formulation of the "πάντες-expressions" in Eph 4,6, they refer to the members of the church (thus, πάντες is to be interpreted as masculine, indicating the believers). In this point MG rightly discovers discontinuity regarding the ancient texts and continuity regarding the Pauline tradition (see, for example, the ecclesiological perspective in 1 Cor 12,6). Yet, one may ask whether the methodological process to determine this development (continuity-discontinuity) results only from a critical-historic analysis of the textual sources, or whether it requires a synchronic approach (in MG's terms, a discourse-interconnected [*diskursvernetzte*] approach).

Via della Pilotta, 25
00187 Rome (Italy)

Juan GRANADOS, S.J.

Carsten MUMBAUER, *Visionen von Gut und Böse. Studien zur Bildtheologie der Offenbarung des Johannes* (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 62). Münster, Aschendorff, 2020. v-347 p. 16.5 × 23.5. €56,00

Die Johannesoffenbarung ist ein Buch, dessen Bilder schlichtweg beeindruckend sind. Der Seher Johannes entfaltet seine theologische Botschaft in und mit bildhafter Sprache. Seine bildgewaltige Ausdrucksstärke ist wahrscheinlich auch einer der Gründe, warum die Johannesoffenbarung zum meistrezipierten Buch der Menschheitsgeschichte wurde. Künstler*innen des Mittelalters ließen sich vom letzten Buch der Bibel genauso inspirieren wie moderne Literaten, Romanciers, Filmemacher und Musiker. Die Bilder der Johannesoffenbarung sind wirkmächtig. Doch wie funktioniert die Bildersprache und was möchte Johannes mit ihr bezwecken? Wie konstruiert Johannes Bilder und wie unterscheidet sich seine literarische Technik von anderen frühjüdischen und frühchristlichen Apokalypsen?

In seiner Dissertationsschrift „Visionen von Gut und Böse. Studien zur Bildtheologie der Offenbarung des Johannes“ stellt sich Carsten Mumbauer genau diesem Fragenkatalog (5), dem er in acht sicherlich komplex geschriebenen, aber methodisch reflektierten und gründlich recherchierten Kapiteln Raum geben möchte.

Mumbauer verortet seine bildtheoretische Analyse in einem historisch-kritischen Paradigma. Er eröffnet sein Werk mit einem einleitungswissenschaftlichen Blick auf die Johannesoffenbarung (Kapitel III, 21-44). Mumbauer möchte die Bilder aus ihrem historischen Kontext heraus verstehen und interpretieren, und stellt er fest, dass Johannes als jüdischer Christusanhänger nicht nur die Schriften Israels rezipierte, um seine soziokulturelle Umwelt zu deuten, sondern auch Motive und Ideen der römisch-hellenistischen Umwelt verarbeitete. Dass Johannes verschiedene Traditionen unterschiedlicher Provenienz miteinander kombinierte, ist eine der Prämissen der Arbeit. Mumbauer distanziert sich damit in gewisser Weise von einem Trend der Forschung der späten 1990er und frühen 2000er Jahre. In dieser Zeit lasen sowohl intertextuelle als auch bildtheoretische Ansätze die Offenbarung hauptsächlich vor dem Hintergrund der Schriften Israels. Auch wenn sie immer noch zu Mumbauers Hauptquellen zählen, so weitet er das Materialobjekt seiner Arbeit deutlich. Er ist sensibel für narrative Interaktionen von Traditionen unterschiedlicher Couleurs, die in der Johannesoffenbarung miteinander verschmolzen sind und eine neue, eigenständige Bilderwelt erzeugen. In diesem Sinne stellt Mumbauer am Ende eines knappen Forschungsüberblickes (Kapitel V, 51-55) als Desiderat fest: „Die Bildersprache des Johannes erschöpft sich nicht in der Aufsummierung der jeweiligen Traditionen, die der Bildwelt zu Grunde liegen, sondern in der Verflechtung diverser Motive und Symbole entstehen neue Bildkompositionen, die ihre theologische Dynamik im Gesamtduktus der Schrift entfalten. Die vorliegende exegetische Untersuchung soll einen bislang innerhalb der Forschungslandschaft wenig beachteten Zusammenhang zwischen den externen Traditionen, die die Bildwelt des Johannes prägen, und den internen Verbindungslinien aufzeigen“ (55).

Seine Analyse möchte zeigen, dass die Bilderwelt der Johannesoffenbarung einer inneren Systematik unterliegt. Johannes reihte Bilder nicht nahtlos aneinander, sondern verknüpfte sie so, dass zwischen den Bildern eine Entwicklung stattfindet.

Mumbauers Beweisgang untergliedert sich in zwei Teile. Im ersten seiner groß angelegten Analysekapitel (Kapitel VI, 57-190) liest er Bilder, die das Gottes- und Christusbild der Offenbarung zum Ausdruck bringen. Er betrachtet die Christusvisionen (58-161) und die Vision um die beiden Zeugen aus Offenbarung 11 (162-190), wobei er die Vision des Menschensohnähnlichen sehr klug als Präambel der gesamten Offenbarung bzw. als eine Schlüsselstelle für die Theologie, Christologie und Anthropologie der Schrift versteht (90-91). Mumbauer geht davon aus, dass Johannes theologische und christologische Aussagen stark miteinander verzahnt hat. Die Christus- und Gottesbilder der Johannesoffenbarung greifen ineinander, so dass durch die Bildersprache eine innige Relation zwischen Gott und Christus zum Ausdruck gebracht wird. Die Christozentrik der Offenbarung schmälere, so Mumbauer, ihre Theozentrik nicht. Vor allem in der himmlischen Thronsaalvision vereine Johannes diese beiden Dimensionen. Dort legt er einen Fokus auf das christologische Bild des Widderbockes, das er jedoch ausschließlich vor dem Hintergrund jüdischer und christlicher Traditionen versteht

(92-117). Hier wäre ein Dialog mit der römisch-hellenistischen Umwelt und insbesondere den Zeus-Traditionen nicht nur spannend, sondern auch weiterführend. Auch bei der Auslegung von Offenbarung 14 belegt er überzeugend, dass die Christusvisionen der Johannesoffenbarung interagieren. Anhand des Bildes des Menschensohnähnlichen auf der Wolke zeigt er, dass der Seher im Laufe der Erzählung seine Bilder weiterentwickelt. Er wechselt die Perspektive auf sie, um Erzähllinien zu vertiefen. Nachdem er in den vorangegangenen Visionen die Macht und den Schöpfungsbezug des Menschensohnähnlichen fokussierte, nimmt die Vision in Offenbarung 14 den Menschen ins Blickfeld: „Johannes betont mit diesem Gerichtsbild den paränetischen Aspekt des Schreibens. Es gilt in der Stunde der Bedrängnis auszuharren und in Treue zu Gott zu stehen“ (139), wobei in der letzten Christusvision in Offenbarung 19 dieses paränetische Anliegen durch eine erneute bildhafte Inszenierung der Gerichtsmächtigkeit des Menschensohnähnlichen und in der Vision vom himmlischen Jerusalem durch eine dezidierte Heilsperspektive für die standhaften Glaubenszeugen eingeschränkt wird (160-161).

Kapitel VII (221-294) fokussiert im Anschluss an die christologischen Bilder Porträts der widergöttlichen Mächte. Mumbauer analysiert den Drachen aus Offenbarung 12 (221-255) sowie die beiden Tiere aus Offenbarung 13; das Tier aus dem Meer (256-272) und das Tier aus der Erde (273-294), wobei er jeweils feststellt, dass die Bilder des Bösen nahezu spiegelbildlich zu den Christusvisionen gestaltet sind (271). Johannes entwickelt Linien seiner Bildersprache, in denen das Böse die Ästhetik des Guten mimetisch nachahmt. Mumbauer stellt auch hierbei heraus, dass Johannes seine Bilder in ein Textnetzwerk einbindet. Der Bildsprache der Offenbarung liegt ein theologisches Programm zugrunde, dass nur funktioniert, wenn man die Bilder in die gesamte Enzyklopädie der Offenbarung einbettet. Gleichzeitig unterstreicht Mumbauer, dass die Bilder des Bösen als Chiffren für den Kaiserkult gelesen werden können (293). Johannes greift Traditionsmaterial nicht wahllos auf, sondern kombiniert sie mit Anspielungen auf seine Umwelt, so dass seine (Erst)leser sie deutlich mit ihrer Lebenswelt assoziieren konnten. Mumbauer spannt einen Bogen zurück zur einleitungswissenschaftlichen Verortung der Offenbarung und unterstreicht, dass die Bilder der Offenbarung einen geschichtlichen Hintergrund besitzen.

Im abschließenden Kapitel VIII „Die Bildtheologie der Johannesoffenbarung“ systematisiert Mumbauer seine Ergebnisse. Er betont, dass es die Eigenart apokalyptischer Literatur sei, „einen Zugang zu einer transzendenten Realität“ zu eröffnen (296). Bilder seien in Apokalypsen Metaphern und Chiffren, die eine dahinterliegende, oftmals die Lebenswirklichkeit der Autoren spiegelnde Botschaft besäße. Im Falle der Johannesoffenbarung haben die „konkreten ökonomischen Realitäten und Vorteile des römischen Kaiserkultes [...] Eingang in die Bildsprache gefunden.“

Gerade dieser Punkt muss sich eine Anfrage gefallen lassen. In jüngster Zeit hat S. Alkier («Schwerwiegende Differenzen. Vernachlässigte Antagonismen in der Johannesapokalypse», *Diversität — Differenz — Dialogizität*. Religion in pluralen Kontexten [Hrsg. S. Alkier – M. Schneider – C. Wiese] [Berlin – Boston, MA 2017] 247-289) m.E. berechtigte Kritik daran geübt, die Bilderwelt der Johannesoffenbarung ausschließlich vor dem Hintergrund des Kaiserkults zu interpretieren. S. Alkier zeigte, dass die Bilder der Offenbarung so vielschichtig sind, dass sie viele Formen der politischen und sozialen Ungerechtigkeit bezeichnen können. Sie sind vielfältig adaptierbar. Leser*innen des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts

konnten sie verstehen, ohne sie auf den Kaiserkult zu beziehen, zumal der Kaiserkult nur eines von vielen verschiedenen Problemen ist, die die Johannesoffenbarung thematisiert.

Zudem lässt die Arbeit an mancher Stelle eine tiefe, methodische Auseinandersetzung mit bildtheoretischen Konzeptionen und Zugängen vermissen. Sowohl Mumbauers Methode und sein Zugang zum Phänomen „Bild“ werden nur sehr knapp erläutert. Sowohl die systematische Zusammenfassung als auch das kurze Methodenkapitel (Kapitel II, 15-20) lassen offen, wie sich Sprachbilder von der Bilderwelt einer materiellen Kultur unterscheiden und welche Relationen sie eingehen können. Gerade wenn man die Johannesoffenbarung als Teil einer antiken Lebenswelt begreifen will, ist eine tiefe Auseinandersetzung mit dem Verhältnis zwischen materiellen und sprachlichen Bildern notwendig. Mumbauer benutzt in diesem Zusammenhang regelmäßig den Begriff der Wirklichkeit. Er möchte betonen, dass die Chiffren der Johannesoffenbarung ein Spiegel der Lebenswelt ihrer Leser*innen sein wollen. Allerdings differenziert er den Begriff m.E. nicht zur Genüge. Gerade sein Zugang macht es aber notwendig, zwischen der durch Sprachbilder erzeugten Wirklichkeit des Textes und den mannigfaltigen Empfindungsmöglichkeiten von Wirklichkeiten durch die Leser*innen des Textes zu differenzieren. Die Wirklichkeit des Bildes, die Wirklichkeit seiner Wirkung und das Empfinden von Wirklichkeiten durch Leser*innen stehen in einem komplexen Verhältnis, das Mumbauer nur teilweise bedenkt. Ebenso betont Mumbauer, dass Figuren in der Bildsprache der Offenbarung eine zentrale Rolle spielen, reflektiert aber nur sehr knapp, wie sich Figuren und Bilder voneinander unterscheiden.

Nichtsdestotrotz ist „Visionen von Gut und Böse“ ein durchaus lesenswertes Buch. Seine Analysen sind stringent, in sich stimmig und führen die Forschung zur Johannesoffenbarung weiter. Gerade dass Mumbauers Ansatz auch das Zueinander von christlichen, jüdischen und römisch-hellenistischen Traditionen im Kontext der Offenbarung ins Blickfeld nimmt, reiht sein Werk ein in eine zukunftsweisende Perspektive der Apokalypseforschung.

Universitätsstr. 31
D-93053 Regensburg

Michael SOMMER

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